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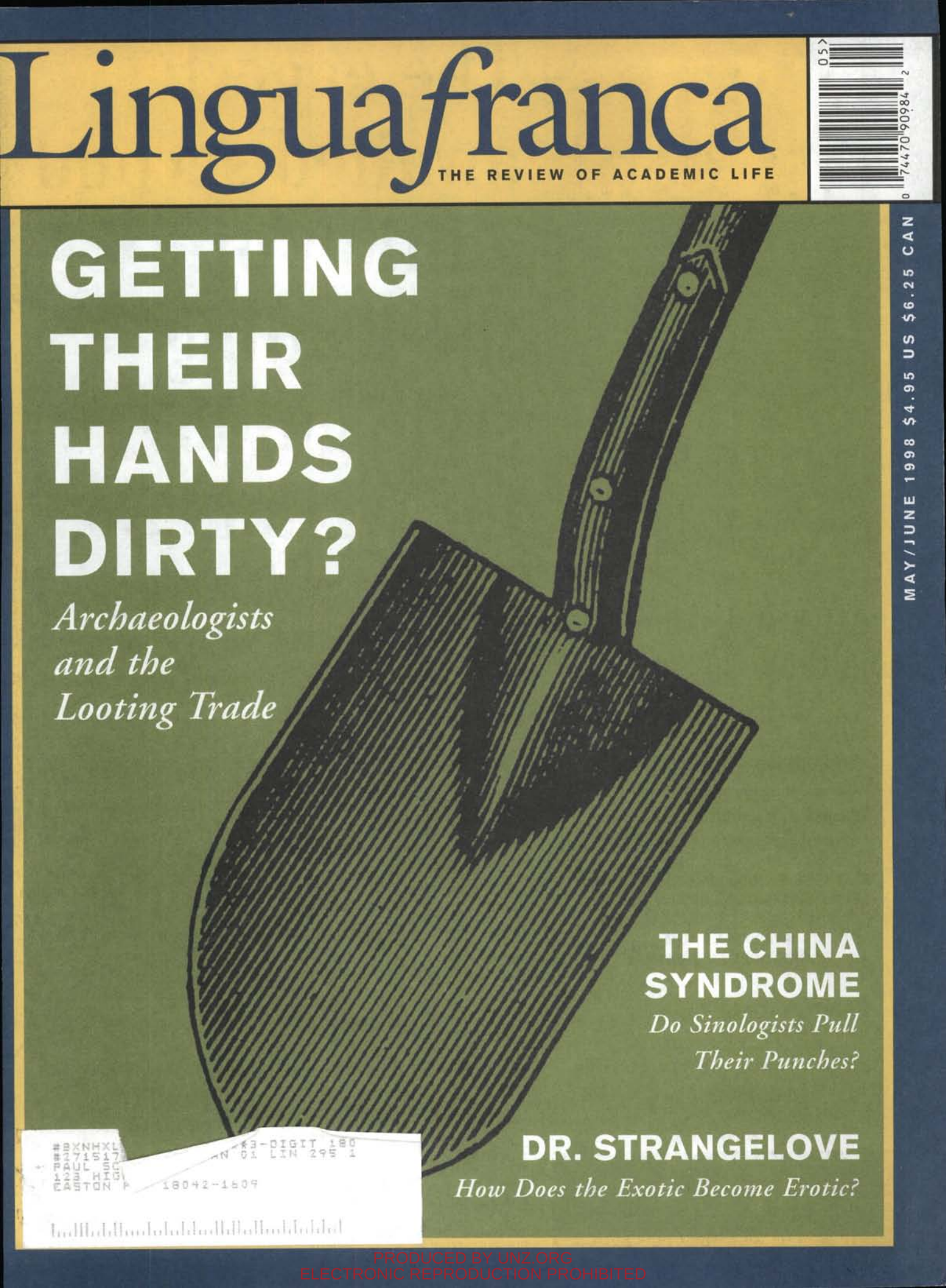

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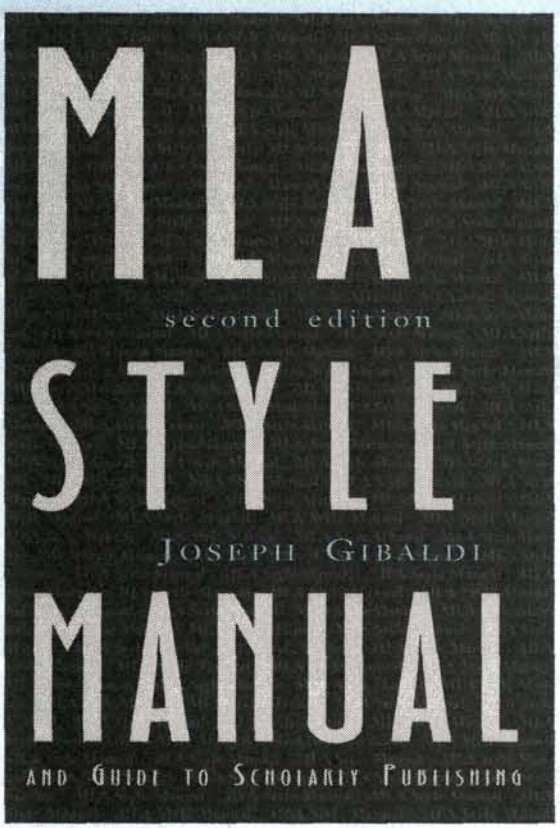

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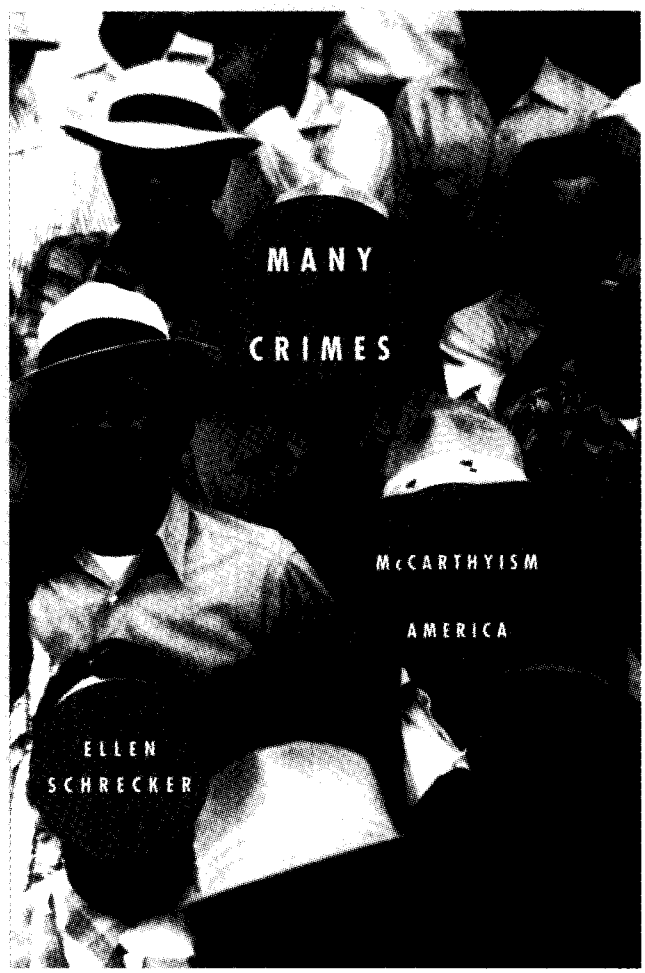

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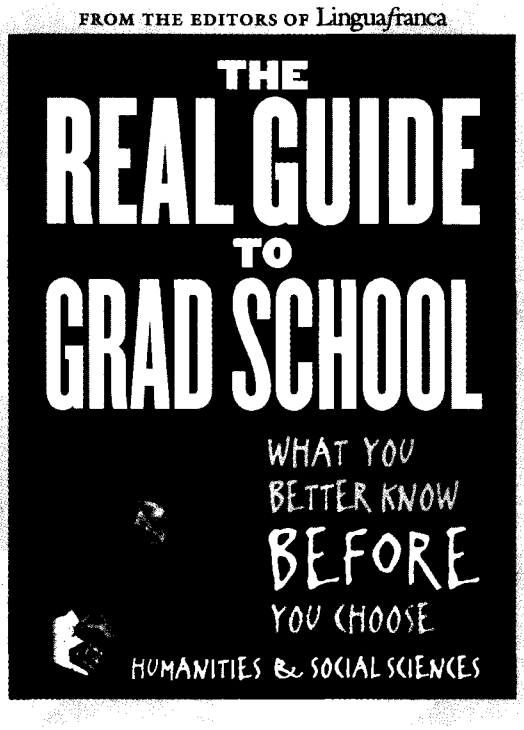

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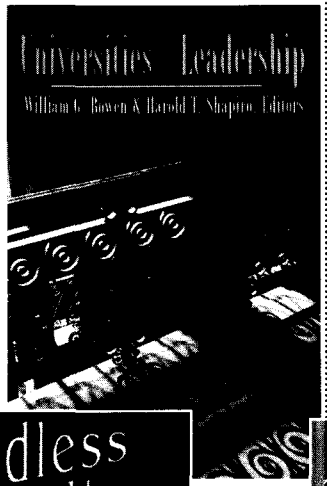

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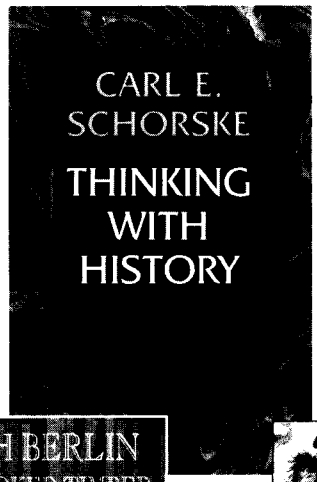

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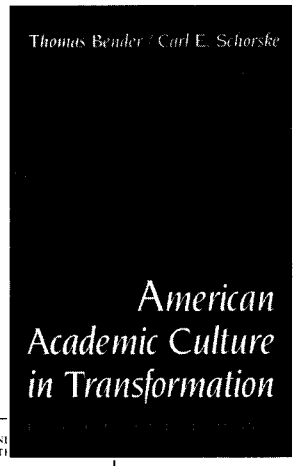

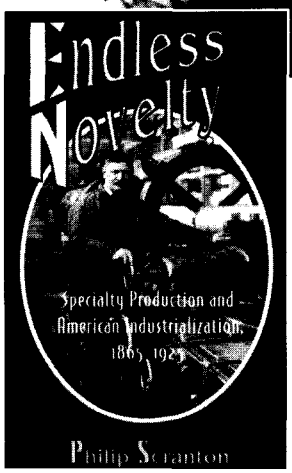

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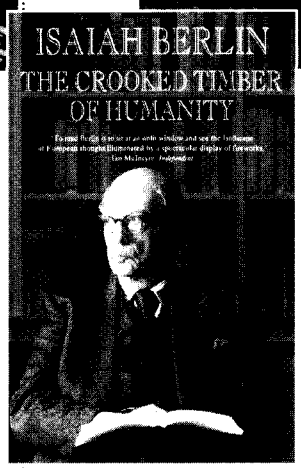

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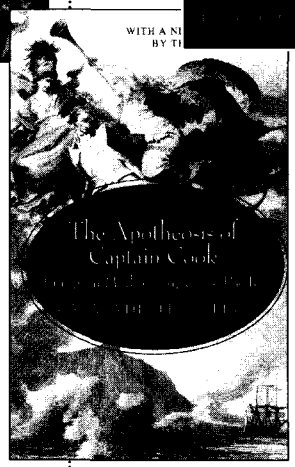

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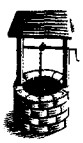

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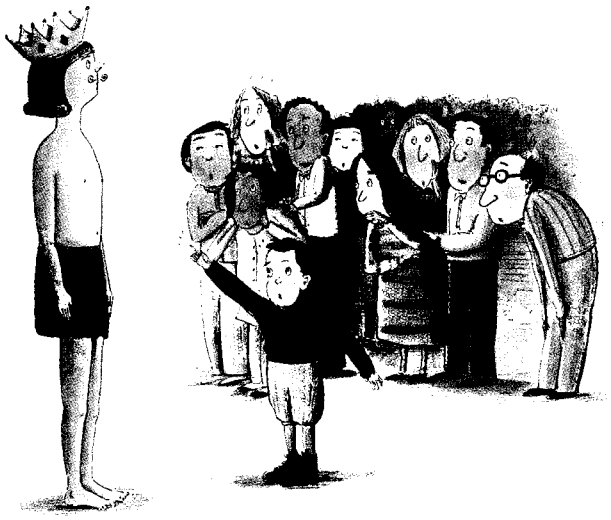

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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REVERSE ANGLE

Jonathan Mahler should have read Norman Davies's *Europe* more closely ["The Polish Perplex," March]. He might have noticed this outstanding exemplar of Davies's Central European perspective: All the maps are turned ninety degrees from the conventional layout, so that Poland and part of Russia, rather than the Mediterranean, are at the bottom of the map, and the British Isles are at the top, looking like distant and insignificant offshore habitats. The accompanying text fails to justify this Central European centricity. As willing as I was to be enlightened by Davies's novel slant, the book did not alter my view of European history. I learned a lot about Norman Davies, but nothing new about Europe. Furthermore, Davies's book is very weak on cultural history. He knows quite a bit about music but offers only a cursory and pedestrian treatment of art, philosophy, and science. He seems poorly read in the major texts of Western European literature. The best parts of the book are his amusing and insightful set-asides on a vast miscellany of subjects. But far from returning to the grand tradition of narrative history, Davies demonstrates a poor grasp of mainline narrative.

Why did the book get such huzzahs of praise in Britain? At a time when British historiography is stagnant and devoid of new ideas, Davies seemed to offer something innovative—until one actually sat down and read him, as the British reviewers obviously did not. The Davies book is of lesser quality than the standard U.S.-authored textbook by R.R. Palmer and Joel Coulton, which—appropriately—gives France centrality in European history.

NORMAN F. CANTOR
SAG HARBOR, NY

HIRE LEARNING

A good case can be made that the four-field approach had *nothing* to do with past problems in Columbia University's anthropology department ["As Bad As It Gets," March]. If Charlotte Allen had checked the national ratings, she would have found that the department at the University of Chicago, which abandoned the four-field approach years ago, is tied for first place with the University of Michigan, which has maintained it. Just plain shrinkage was the real culprit at Columbia.

Furthermore, far from being isolated, the younger faculty members recruited in the mid-1980s consistently participated in both formal and informal decisions as far as departmental status allowed. One of the so-called gang of four, Don Melnick, became chair immediately after Professor Bulliet stepped down as receiver. Professor Melnick was succeeded as chair by another of the four, Elaine Combs-Schilling.

More serious is Allen's statement that I was the "front man" for David Cohen and that it was he who hired the new faculty in 1995–1996. I did not return from a research sabbatical to be a front man. Cohen's role, powerful as it was, was limited to making it clear that the new chair of the department should come from outside Columbia and then, *crucially*, guaranteeing the moral and financial support for what was to become a successful search process. He was consistently respectful of the protocol that departments hire their own faculty. The normal process at Columbia is for the administration to confirm or reject departmental nominations and negotiate contract terms with chosen candidates. In our case, the actual search process began with the deliberations of a committee consisting of myself; two other members of the anthropology department, Myron Cohen and Roslind Morris; the chair of the Barnard anthropology department, Nan Rothchild; and two outsiders suggested by the administration but confirmed by me. The committee made nonbinding suggestions to the full anthropology faculty concerning a rank list of potential candidates for approval. Decisions concerning offers were made *exclusively* by the tenured

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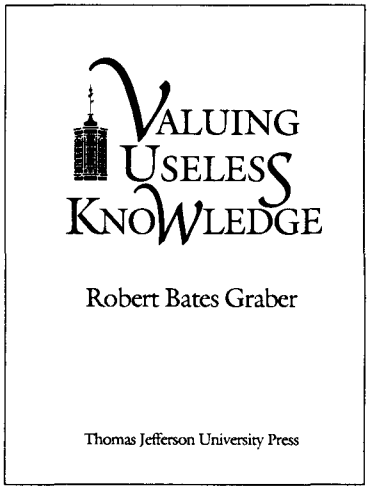

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Field *Notes*

CRACKS IN THE WALL

LAST SEPTEMBER, AN EARTHquake shook Italy's Umbria region, sending a Cimabue fresco on the ceiling of Assisi's St. Francis Basilica crashing to the floor. Two friars assessing the damage were killed in an aftershock. In the wake of the disaster, Italians were heartened to learn that the cathedral's most treasured artwork—the *St. Francis Legend* frescoes, attributed to Giotto—was spared. The radiant panels were obscured only briefly, by a plume of dust that floated up from the Cimabue's shattered remains.

A recent book by Italian art restorer Bruno Zanardi, however, has sent another shock wave through Assisi. The Florentine master Giotto didn't paint the 1296 *St. Francis Legend*, claims Zanardi, who cleaned the frescoes between 1978 and 1982. In fact, he writes in *Il cantiere di Giotto* (Skira, Milan), three unheralded Roman artists painted the series. In Giotto's stead, Zanardi places Pietro Cavallini, the member of the trio responsible for the cycle's finest panels, such as "St. Francis Preaching to the Birds."

Does the history of art need a rewrite? Ever since Vasari attributed the frescoes to Giotto in 1568, the *St. Francis* cycle—which chronicles the life of the peace-loving monk—has been celebrated as the creation of a daring Florentine who single-handedly pumped blood into the lifeless poses and frozen surfaces of Byzantine painting. Ernst Gombrich's *Story of Art* claims that Giotto "rediscovered the art of creating the illusion of depth on a flat surface." Before Giotto brandished his brush, Gombrich writes, "Nothing like this had been done for a thousand years." As a result, Giotto's Florence has long been seen as the wellspring of the Renaissance.

Zanardi's study is by far the most comprehensive look at the twenty-eight frescoes. He agrees that the cycle is groundbreaking: "For the first time, we see completely the naturalistic style that will dominate Western art until our own century." But he disagrees that Florentine know-how was responsible for the breakthrough. To make his case that Cavallini was the fresco's principal author, he points to the habits of medieval fresco workshops. A workshop's methods, reports the restorer, "remained consistent even in different works"; therefore, today's scholars can detect the signature flourishes of these traveling troupes of artists. And, Zanardi says, the *St. Francis Legend* frescoes have "Rome" written all over them.

The argument is complicated. First, for all its supple realism, Zanardi reveals, the *St. Francis* cycle was created with a technique that evokes not medievalists but Matisse: paper cutouts. In order to standardize output and ensure stylistic unity in the hastily painted figures, the leader of a workshop fashioned numerous *patroni*, or tracing patterns on waxed paper. While no patroni have survived to modern times—making their existence a source of dispute—Zanardi says the evidence was right before his eyes: "I simply traced the heads in the Franciscan cycle on transparent paper and then checked how well all these outlines fit onto each other." They fit like a glove.

What does all this have to do with determining authorship? Zanardi concludes that, in fact, *three* discrete sets of patroni appear in the course of the *St. Francis* series—suggesting that different workshops executed the cycle. Consider how the figure of Francis gently morphs: In the early panels, Zanardi reports, he is "1.8 meters tall with wide eyes and mouth and a pink complexion." In panels 7 through 22, the monk shrinks, becoming "1.7 meters tall with long mouth and eyes and a yellowish complexion." The final six panels display a sickly saint "1.9 meters tall with tight mouth and eyes and a greenish complexion." The master who created the *second* set of panels, then, produced the lion's share of the work—as well as the most elegant compositions.

Zanardi next scrutinizes how the workshops created such vibrant flesh tones. He claims that the paint recipes used in the *St. Francis Legend* are all Roman in flavor—and therefore unlikely to be the product of Giotto's workshop. The three cooks in the Assisi kitchen started with a generous sage-green priming layer, a particularly Roman preference. (In contrast, the complexions of Florentine figures are decidedly less Mediterranean in tone.) These verdant layers were then covered by a succession of pink and rose shades. The second Assisi

DETAIL FROM "ST. FRANCIS PREACHING TO THE BIRDS"

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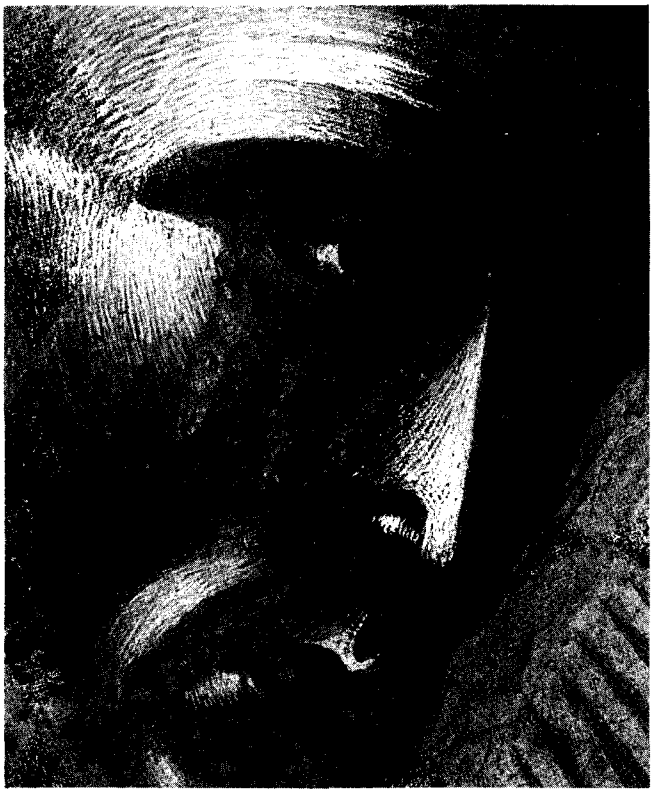

workshop, Zanardi notes, had a curious touch: "Very thin but nonetheless visible threads of color" were placed on top of each other to enhance modeling. Although these striations blend together when viewed at a distance, from the scaffold Zanardi could distinguish the juxtaposed strands of green, ocher, and pink. (Up close, in fact, the effect gives the faces a colorful-yet-wrinkled appearance.)

Here is the key to Zanardi's argument. "Pietro Cavallini's frescoes in the Roman church of Santa Lucia," he says, "display precisely the same mode of applying color—the spreading of thread-thin brushstrokes to create a subtle weaving effect." Giotto's technique, Zanardi continues, was wholly different. Take Giotto's famed Arena Chapel frescoes in Padua, created ten years *after* the Assisi frescoes, in 1305. In lieu of a woven texture, the Florentine preferred velvety-smooth, translucent coats of color. Other Giotto frescoes suggest his style remained consistent throughout his career; as a result, concludes Zanardi, "we must exclude Giotto as the author of the *St. Francis Legend*."

So who was this Pietro Cavallini, then? He lived sometime between 1240 and 1330. A letter written by Cavallini's son around 1340 claims that his father "lived to be 100 years old, and always went about with an uncovered head, even in winter." A few commission statements have been found. That's about it. (In fact, so little is known that some Italian scholars have countered that Cavallini is a composite of various trecento artists.)

Was Rome, not Florence, the wellspring of the Renaissance?

Making matters worse, most of Cavallini's works no longer exist. In 1823 his masterpiece, a huge fresco cycle in the Basilica of San Paolo outside Rome, was consumed in a fire. The expansion of St. Peter's Cathedral in the Vatican probably led to the destruction of other works. The Cavallinis that survive are primarily mosaics—in particular, a lush series at the church of Santa Maria, in the Trastevere section of Rome. These mosaics, completed around 1290, display a precocious sense of perspective that resonates with the *St. Francis* series: The knees of seated figures amply protrude from beneath drapery, and the faces blush with life. But mosaics, the signature medium of Byzantine art, have never been seen as a vanguard form. As a result, Cavallini's early stab at naturalism has frequently been glossed over by art historians.

While Zanardi's reattribution has unsettled many Italians—the newspaper *La Stampa* huffed that the judgment was "hasty"—it won't surprise many American scholars. Studies on Giotto have long been divided between Italians and Anglo-Saxons, with the latter being far more skeptical of Vasari's vaunting of all things Florentine. Several art historians have wondered aloud if it were really plausible for Giotto, born around 1270, to have been granted a grand papal commission in his mid-twenties. Nowadays, many English-language textbooks ascribe the *St. Francis Legend* to "Anonymous."

In a new book, *Painting in the Age of Giotto* (Penn State), Canadian art historian Hayden Maginnis concludes on stylistic grounds that the *St. Francis Legend* cannot be by Giotto. In fact, he believes Giotto consciously broke away from the naturalistic mode developed at Assisi. Compared to the scrupulously detailed architecture of the Assisi cycle, Giotto's frescoes are radically spare in design, with compositions that are less mimetic than symbolic. "Verisimilitude was sacrificed to narrative purpose," he writes. "Pure naturalism takes second place." In Giotto's Padua frescoes, he observes, stark blue backgrounds and a flattened perspective focus attention on the expressions of the figures.

For his part, Zanardi says that his discoveries will hardly crumble Giotto's marbled reputation: They simply underscore that Giotto was not an "isolated miracle" but the beneficiary of a creative ferment that had bubbled up from Rome. Indeed, Zanardi—who's from Pontremoli, in Tuscany, not Rome—thinks that the traditional notion that Florence spawned the Renaissance is awfully quaint. "Without question," he says, "in the thirteenth century, Rome was the most important city in the world. It just makes sense that the Renaissance began there."

DANIEL ZALEWSKI

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TIMMIE HELTER

IN RECENT YEARS, EDUCATIONAL reformers have taken aim at an institution close to the heart of the academy: tenure. The National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education, established by Congress in 1997, has posed such questions as "Do professors work hard enough?" Meanwhile, legislators in Illinois, Minnesota, and Texas have pressured their state universities to adopt new systems of posttenure review, requiring unproductive professors to face salary cuts and other penalties.

This new anti-tenure crusade has been led by Republican lawmakers and conservative think tanks. And yet one faction has been conspicuous by its absence: right-wing professors. Although many conservative faculty members take the familiar position that tenure too often protects "goof-offs and freeloaders," a surprising number also defend the status quo—and indeed bitterly resent the new threats of intervention from above. The reason? Without tenure, many conservative academics fear, a left-liberal orthodoxy would drive dissenters out of the university entirely.

"Things have come full circle," says Marianne Jennings, a professor of legal and ethical studies at the Arizona State University College of Business. (Off campus, she is a leading advocate of back-to-basics math instruction in elementary schools.) "Early in the century, radicals were losing their jobs. Now it's conservatives who need protection." Thomas Reeves, a professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside and the author of *The Empty Church: The Suicide of Liberal Christianity* (Free Press, 1996), agrees. "It's better to be a pariah than unemployed," he says. "And the thing that keeps conservatives employed is tenure. I'm as critical as anyone of the leftist orthodoxy in academia, but in the real world getting rid of tenure would only make that orthodoxy worse."

This right-wing accommodation with tenure stands in stark contrast to the views propounded in one of modern conservatism's founding texts: William F. Buckley Jr.'s 1951 *God and Man at Yale* argues strenuously against tenure and "the hoax of 'academic freedom.'" In the case of private colleges, Buckley insisted, boards of trustees and responsible alumni have the right and the duty to establish the institution's goals and norms. If Keynesians in the economics department or agnostics in philosophy violate those norms, well, out the door with them. "If the people are to retain their sovereignty, they cannot relinquish their right to impose unemployment upon the trader in commodities or ideas for which there is no market," Buckley proclaimed.

Buckley's pinched view of academic governance hasn't exactly disappeared. There are echoes of *God and Man* in the recent legislative attacks on tenure and in the activities of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (formerly the National Alumni Forum), founded and chaired by Lynne Cheney. And there is also a booming industry in high-minded calls for governance reform: The ideologically moderate Richard Chait, who teaches at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, has recently published several foundation-supported studies that purport to bolster the case against tenure. As a paid con-

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sultant to the Minnesota Board of Regents during the university's 1996–1997 tenure wars, Chait encouraged the regents to propose a posttenure review system that would have been the most radical in the country. Still, within the academy, most ideological conservatives feel a certain empathy with Buckley's hypothetical Keynesians and agnostics. "I respect Buckley tremendously," says Jennings. "But with all due respect, he never had to make an academic career for himself or deal with department politics."

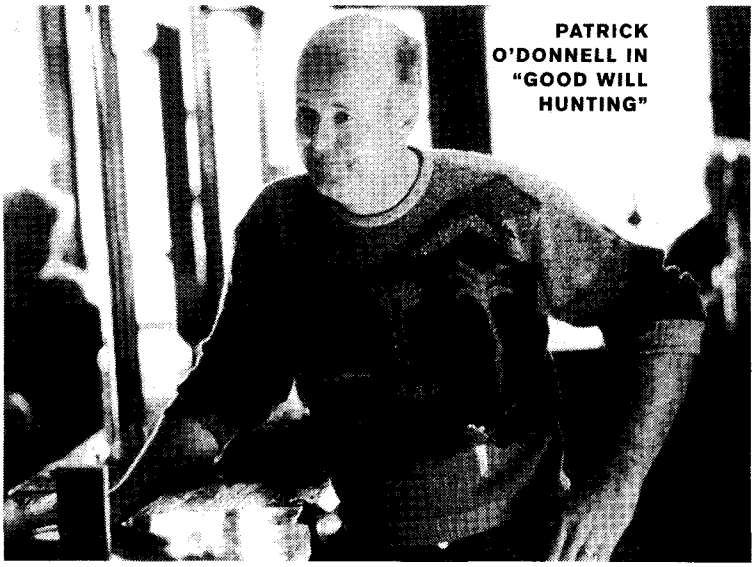
Indeed, many conservative academics share their liberal counterparts' distrust of the managerialist vocabulary bandied about in legislatures and boardrooms. "Universities do need to respond to free-market pressures, of course," says James Tracy, a University of Minnesota history professor and president of the Minnesota chapter of the anti-P.C. National Association of Scholars. "But you're talking about a conceptual blunt instrument here. If you're interested in fostering the study of ancient Greek, you're not going to get very far running a university on a free-market model." What's more, Tracy reports, during Minnesota's 1996–1997 battle over tenure policy, "almost every member of the Minnesota Association of Scholars wanted to defend tenure. Some members even supported the effort to unionize the faculty."

There *is* one noteworthy strain of conservative academic critique of tenure: the view that tenure, like professional certification in law and medicine, improperly constricts and distorts the labor market. University of Central Arkansas economist Walter Block recently co-wrote a strongly worded anti-tenure article in the *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*. But he also emphasizes that universities ought to undertake tenure reform voluntarily. The idea of any government intervention rankles his ultra-libertarian sensibilities: Meddling politicians "may call themselves conservatives," but he believes the battles they start "are really arguments within socialism."

These debates raise an awkward question for pro-tenure conservatives: If present-day universities really are run by generally intolerant liberals, then what about the circumstances of adjunct and junior faculty with conservative views? Wouldn't they need the protections of academic freedom most? All of the academic conservatives contacted for this article admitted to feeling anguish over this question—but most agreed, in the end, that any serious tinkering with tenure is likely to make the academy, in their eyes, still worse. As University of Virginia English professor Paul Cantor wrote in *Academic Questions*, "Any system we propose to replace tenure is in all likelihood going to be administered by the very radicals whose power we are trying to diminish."

DAVID GLENN

MATH DEMON



PATRICK O'DONNELL IN "GOOD WILL HUNTING"

AFTER THE RELEASE OF THE Hollywood epic *Amistad* last December, Columbia University history professor Eric Foner wrote a scathing editorial in *The New York Times*, charging that the captive-slave drama was "by no means a work of history." Four months later, the movie failed to pick up an Oscar. Meanwhile, the award for the best original screenplay went to *Good Will Hunting*, the surprise blockbuster about an obstinate working-class math prodigy. The moral? Hollywood, listen up: Scholarship counts. Gus Van Sant ensured *Good Will Hunting*'s academic integrity by putting on his payroll someone who really knew how to solve for an eigenvector.

The story of how it happened is one of dumb luck. It was mid-March 1997, and Gus Van Sant was eating lunch at a small Vietnamese restaurant on Spadina Avenue in Toronto, where he was shooting his film. Intrigued by an older gentleman with a Scottish accent at the table next to him, Van Sant decided to approach the man about being an extra in the film. The gentleman turned out to be Patrick O'Donnell, a particle physicist at the University of Toronto. "When I told Gus that I teach physics for a living, he became very interested," recalls O'Donnell. Van Sant was so interested, in fact, that after lunch he followed O'Donnell back to his office, where his blackboard was filled with symbols, equations, and

Hollywood, listen up: Scholarship counts.

GEORGE KRAYCHYK

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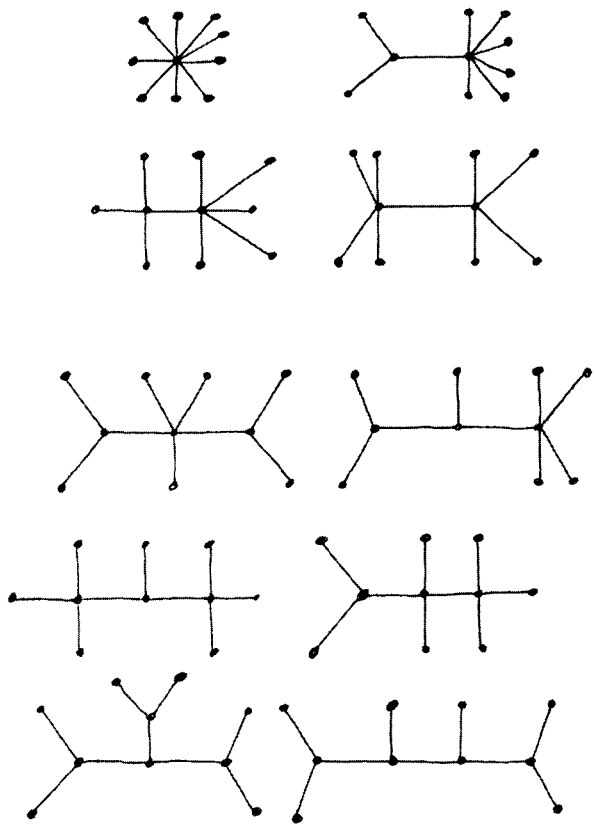
diagrams. The next day, Van Sant asked him to join the crew of *Good Will Hunting* as official math consultant.

Three weeks later, Van Sant returned to O'Donnell with the production script and the heartthrob actor-screenwriters, Ben Affleck and Matt Damon (Damon also plays the delinquent autodidact Will Hunting in the film).

The physicist promptly pointed out the screenwriters' gaffes. "First they had the character of Professor Lambeau, a combinatorial mathematician, winning a Nobel Prize," he says. "But you can't win a Nobel Prize for math! The story goes that Alfred Nobel's lady friend ran off with a mathematician." The corrected screenplay now refers to Lambeau as a recipient of the prestigious Fields Medal.

More egregiously, says O'Donnell, "the one proof in the original script did not work." Patiently, he explains: "Will Hunting has to prove that one edge of a larger rectangle, subdivided into rectangles with integer sides, is an integer. But in his proof, he was always dividing by two. So if it were an integer, the sides of the rectangle would have to be a multiple of two. If you had three, five, and nine unit-long sides, for example, it wouldn't work." Elementary, my dear Damon.

On the set, the extras and the grips would constantly ask O'Donnell, "Is all that stuff real?" Well, almost. There is one scene, O'Donnell admits, where two plus two does not equal four. Lambeau and an esteemed foreign mathematician are trying to figure out Will's proof, when Will finally says, "Look, I wrote it down." The professors turn to face the whiz kid, who places his proof onto a projector. "That scene was shot from many angles,"



GRAPH THEORY RESEARCH PROBLEM USED IN *GOOD WILL HUNTING*

O'Donnell says. "But luckily, Gus chose the one where the projected image is cast over their faces. Since the projection is blurry, you can't really see the 'genius' work." O'Donnell chuckles. "There are gaps as the proof proceeds. I combined particle physics with graph theory—if I could have done that proof correctly, I would've published it."

Nevertheless, he insists, "everything else was real." One scene, for example, in which Will solves a difficult problem on a blackboard, required a visually impressive set of equations. To find one, O'Donnell plowed through old journals. "Matt is supposed to look like he's doing graffiti, so I tracked down a graph-theory research problem. It's really a good one." (Interested readers should see Frank Harary and Geert Prins, "The Number of Homeomorphically Irreducible Trees, and Other Species," *Acta Mathematica* 101 [1959], 141–162.) O'Donnell transcribed this problem on the blackboard. In fact, he says, he wrote all of the on-screen equations, and after he and

> Will Hunting's math is good. But mightn't the film have benefited from a history consultant as well?

his wife saw the movie together, his wife said, "It was strange, I kept recognizing your handwriting, but someone else was always finishing the work."

Delighted by his newfound vocation off camera, O'Donnell was secretly hoping Van Sant would make him an extra in the film as well. In the end, he was given a cameo: the part of Marty the bar patron, a slow-witted regular who sits at the bar where Sean, the psychiatrist played by Robin Williams, meets with Lambeau, the mathematician played by Stellan Skarsgård. In a thick Scottish burr, Marty's one line to Sean is: "Bullshit! You didn't say that!"

Evidently still enchanted by his first brush with Hollywood, O'Donnell proudly recounts the afternoon when Van Sant, sitting on a dolly, was shooting the scene in the bar. "Give up physics, Pat!" Van Sant yelled. "You'll make more money in movies!" And he describes the parties he attended with his wife: the preproduction social, the wrap gala, the New York premiere, and the post-premiere fete. But the professor has not made a permanent move to the big screen. "The truth is," he admits, "I haven't received another offer yet."

Will Hunting's math is good. But mightn't the film have benefited from a history consultant as well? Boston University professor emeritus Howard Zinn, a family friend of the Damons and author of *A People's History of the United States* (which Will tells Robin Williams's Sean "will knock you on your ass"), concedes that Hunting's discussion of Colonial historiography in a Harvard Square bar is not entirely supported by the scholarly record. "Some of it's fanciful, I think, and some is real," he says. But Zinn notes that fiction doesn't have to be perfectly accurate. And in any case, he might have added, the film has done its part for the study of the past. HarperCollins says sales of Zinn's book have risen sharply since *Good Will Hunting*'s release.

MARK RAMBLER

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SCHOLARS WITH SUBPOENAS

TAKING SIDES COMES EASILY to Kate Bronfenbrenner and Albert Lannon. Bronfenbrenner, director of Cornell's Labor Education Research Center and an expert on union organizing, defines herself as "unquestionably pro-labor." Lannon, a long-time activist who now teaches labor studies at three colleges near San Francisco, exhorts American union members to build "wonderful solidarity" with workers in other parts of the globe. But taking sides can have consequences—especially when you introduce your academic credentials into a labor dispute. The companies you criticize might drag you into court.

Bronfenbrenner's troubles began last May, when she participated in a town meeting in Pittsburgh. Rep. Lane Evans, an Illinois Democrat, sponsored the event in order to investigate the labor practices at Beverly Enterprises, an Arkansas-based nursing home chain that has clashed with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) ever since Beverly employees began to organize, in the late 1980s. In a seven-minute presentation culled largely from her academic research, Bronfenbrenner called Beverly "a notorious labor-law violator." Beverly took issue with that characterization. This past January, it sued Bronfenbrenner for defamation and asked for more than $250,000 in damages.

Lannon has also found himself a legal target. Last September, two students from Laney College in Oakland, California, joined a group of longshoremen picketing the Port of Oakland's Yusen Terminal. (The occasion: an international solidarity event in honor of fired dock workers from Liverpool.) Representatives of the Pacific Maritime Association noticed a banner reading LANEY COLLEGE LABOR STUDIES CLUB at the rally. They then sued the group—an informal student organization of fifteen to twenty students—for damages, claiming the picketing essentially shut down the dockyard for days. Legal responsibility is largely falling on Lannon, who chairs Laney's labor studies program. "I handle the club's administrative stuff," he says. "They pay me for an hour and a half a week."

From the moment they filed their complaint, Beverly has suggested that they aim to go after Bronfenbrenner for her scholarship. "With little or no basis in fact, Prof. Bronfenbrenner wants the public, legislators, and the academic community to believe that her peculiar opinions are well-researched fact; they are not," Hugh Reilly, a Beverly lawyer, told *Lingua Franca*. But Bronfenbrenner has plenty of fans: At Cornell, she has made a name for herself as one of the most meticulous and unsparing social scientists to study the labor movement. Almost uniformly, her studies draw upon what she calls "micro-level data": interviews, surveys, and internal documents from a particular organizing effort. She tries to show how seemingly minor issues in an organizing drive—whether organizers had enough person-to-person contact with workers, whether the union emphasized fairness and dignity or focused on bread-and-butter issues—can have a major impact on the result.

But micro-level data, unlike government records or National Labor Relations Board findings, doesn't just sit around in statistical abstracts or CD-ROMs. Beverly has demanded that Bronfenbrenner hand over all of her research data—including interview transcripts and confidential surveys—during the discovery process, presumably to determine whether she misrepresented the opinions of her subjects. "Dr. Bronfenbrenner's 'Town Meeting' submission claims that her statements there are supported by her 'research,'" says Reilly. "We believe that is not the case, and want to determine, if she did any research at all, why her 'results' contradict the publicly available record." Bronfenbrenner fears the request is intended to deter future research as well as to evaluate past research. "You have to establish a trust with the people you study. That's why the threat of discovery is so intimidating," she says. Many employees just won't participate if they know their boss might subpoena the interview.

KATE BRONFENBRENNER

A nursing home chain wants Bronfenbrenner to hand over all of her research data.

The irony, says Bronfenbrenner, is that her research is "very critical of the labor movement. I have to jump through hoops just to get published." Bronfenbrenner refuses to do advocacy work where she does not have complete say over what gets written up, nor does she just do "best-practice" studies of programs that are already known to work. Still, one can be critical of one's subjects and still be of great use to them. In her recent book, *Organizing to Win* (Cornell), Bronfenbrenner argues that—notwithstanding the damage done to the American labor movement by technology and

MIKE GREENIAR

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trade liberalization—unions could be doing a lot better job of organizing new workers. And her research has provided a good deal of ammunition to reform movements within organized labor.

At the moment, Bronfenbrenner's odds look good, thanks to a technicality. Because she was speaking at the behest of Rep. Evans, Bronfenbrenner might be able to claim testimonial immunity—the protection against slander claims that is extended to everyone who testifies in congressional hearings. On March 5, a federal judge in Pittsburgh invoked immunity and dismissed libel charges against Rosemary Trump, the president of SEIU Local 585, who also spoke at the town meeting. But Beverly is hardly giving up: It plans to appeal the Trump decision, and continues to press its suit against Bronfenbrenner. The company, at least in the view of Bronfenbrenner's supporters, does not need to win a favorable judgment to make its point. If Beverly's request for discovery is allowed to proceed, it will have already won.

"You take a swing, they take a swing. That's the way it is," says Lannon.

As for the Laney College case, it has some technicalities of its own—in this case, a misspelling. Pacific Maritime's original lawsuit named the "Laney College Labor *Group*," not the "Labor Club." Meanwhile, lawyers defending the picketers have asked to have the entire case dismissed. As for Lannon, he is worried less about getting hit with damages than about being held in contempt of court for refusing to turn over the club's membership list. To his relief, several of the club's co-defendants in the ILWU have already been found not-liable or were handed minimal fines.

Still, the two cases have made the professors involved minor causes celebres within the academy; a letter of protest on behalf of Bronfenbrenner circulated via e-mail, and more than 600 scholars signed on. And some activists are already hoping the case might bolster recent efforts to unite labor and the academic left, to show they have a common cause in protecting rights and opposing corporate power. Can the cooperation between workers and intellectuals dreamed of by the likes of historian Nelson Lichtenstein and philosopher Richard Rorty—even the next Popular Front—be far behind? Or has Bronfenbrenner's plight resonated because the Beverly suit appears to be a clear-cut invasion of her academic freedom? There, after all, professors have rarely lacked for solidarity.

Lannon suggests a third alternative: Organizing unions or walking out on strikes can be a dirty, rough-and-tumble, and sometimes violent business. "You get in a fight with someone. You take a swing, they take a swing. That's the way it is," he says. Any large labor dispute invariably leads to scores of lawsuits, NLRB grievance procedures, and other complaints. Both sides tend to cast a wide net. Professors may or may not want to choose sides. But if they do, they're likely to get tangled up, like everyone else.

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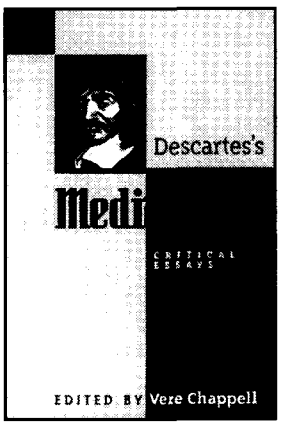

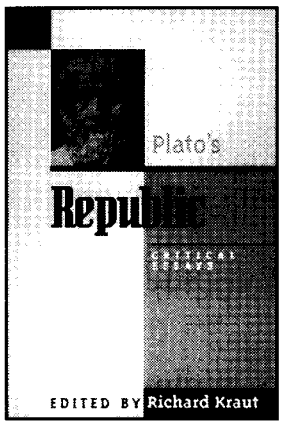

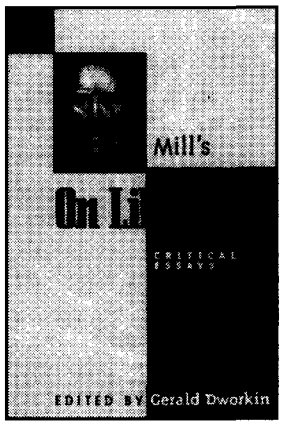

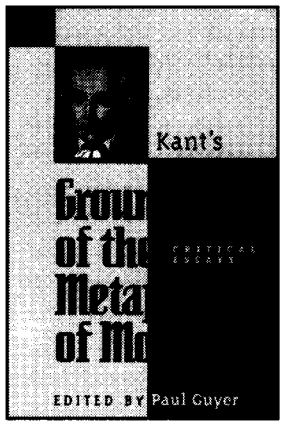

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....

Beverly Lemire, professor of history at the University of New Brunswick and author of *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade Before the Factory 1660–1800* (St. Martin's, 1997).

"Fashion's academic allure is growing, thanks in part to scholars like **Daniel Roche**, who, in *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge, 1994), uses fashion to penetrate 'to the heart of social history.' Roche revises our view of both the height of fashion among that era's French elites and the spread of popular fashion to non-elite buyers. The codes of fashion, the cost of wardrobes, the making, mending, and recycling of garments—all reveal the social choices and values assigned to this most essential commodity. An excellent complement to Roche's perspective is *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective* (California, 1996), edited by **Victoria de Grazia** with **Ellen Furlough**. The collection's essays reassess femininity and masculinity by examining consumer purchases ranging from the clothing of eighteenth-century Parisian coquettes to the cosmetics of twentieth-century American women."

....

Joanne Finkelstein, professor of sociology and cultural studies at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia and author of *Fashion: An Introduction* (NYU, 1998).

"The word 'suit' has come to be used as an epithet for a boring, corporate person, but **Anne Hollander**, in *Sex and Suits* (Knopf, 1994), shows how much more a suit can reveal. Whether worn by men or women, she argues, the suit embodies the perfect style and

ERIC AXENE

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aesthetic of the modern. Its tailoring, shaping of the body, and ease of fit display the crucial modern values of efficiency, simplicity, and a desire for beauty. As Hollander sees it, the persistence of classical, humanist values in modern society can be traced through the aesthetics of body presentation. In addition to its wonderful illustrations, the book offers fascinating asides. The modern business suit, for instance, was at one stage in its career equivalent to our contemporary blue jeans and T-shirt: the rebellious wear of the new generation of brash young men seeking to remake society."

• • • •

Linda Drew, senior lecturer in fashion studies at the London College of Fashion and author of *The Business of Fashion* (Cambridge, 1992).

"**Angela McRobbie**'s ***British Fashion Design: Rag Trade or Image Industry?*** (Routledge, 1998) provides an illuminating account of the education and career patterns of fashion designers in Britain. Drawing on sociological, political, and cultural studies perspectives, McRobbie highlights the insatiable appetite for 'spectacular consumption'—from the 1980s retail boom to the more recent canonization of British designers in the Paris fashion establishment. McRobbie's well-documented account of fashion education in Britain exposes the relative absence of theory in fashion course work, and her close-grained analysis of working patterns in both craft and mass manufacturing points to some of the acute insecurities in the industry's labor market. **Stella Bruzzi**, in ***Undressing Cinema: Clothing and Identities in the Movies*** (Routledge, 1998), focuses on the function of fashion in film narrative. She considers everything from the costuming of male identities in *Reservoir Dogs* to clothing as fetish in *The Piano*."

• • • •

Robert J.S. Ross, professor and chair of sociology at Clark University and co-author of *Global Capitalism: The New Leviathan* (SUNY, 1990).

"Sweatshops are back and as bad as they were a century ago. In ***Behind the Label: Inequality in the Los Angeles Apparel Industry*** (California, forthcoming), **Richard Appelbaum** and **Edna Bonacich** exhaustively investigate the pyramid of power and profits in the Los Angeles garment industry. At the base are seamsters paid less than minimum wage, and at the apex are contractors, manufacturers, retailers, financiers, and landlords. Appelbaum and Bonacich have written the definitive book on the structure of the apparel industry. ***No Sweat: Fashion, Free Trade, and the Rights of Garment Workers*** (Verso, 1997), edited by **Andrew Ross**, includes essays by staffers from UNITE—the apparel union—and other activists who discuss their battles with sweatshops in New York City, Los Angeles, and Mexico. Unfortunately, the collection also includes turgid cultural studies essays about fashion. Taken as a whole, *No Sweat* speaks well for the new labor movement, but the implication for cultural studies is grim."

• • • •

Jo-Ann Mort, communications director of the UNITE garment workers' union and editor of *Not Your Father's Labor Movement: Inside the New AFL-CIO* (Verso, forthcoming).

"Fashion is an industry totally dependent on the global economy. In fact, today's all-American youthful lifestyle is created by those who sew and make the clothes and sneakers—not just by the designers or marketers who advertise them. A young, mostly female workforce in Asia and Latin America sews Guess Jeans, Nike sneakers, and other trademark clothes sold in fashion magazines and malls all across America. As **William Greider** demonstrates through a series of case studies in his mammoth and important book, ***One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism*** (Simon and Schuster, 1997), the all-American image is largely dependent on countless contract employees in Indonesia and elsewhere, working without rights, without freedom, and without hope of experiencing even the remotest part of the comfortable lifestyle they weave and stitch."

• • • •

Susan B. Kaiser, professor of textiles and clothing at the University of California at Davis and author of *The Social Psychology of Clothing: Symbolic Appearances in Context* (Fairchild, 1997).

"Processes of production and consumption are frequently—and falsely—represented as worlds apart. **Judith G. Coffin**'s ***The Politics of Women's Work: The Paris Garment Trades, 1750–1915*** (Princeton, 1996) helps to put this dichotomized framing to rest by illustrating how women's livelihoods and consumer capitalism have been historically bound together through fabrics, fashions, and sewing machines. Sewing machines, for instance, besides being tools for the mass production of clothing, have been marketed to women as domestic consumer goods. In some ways, **Malcolm Barnard**'s ***Fashion as Communication*** (Routledge, 1996) also captures the complex interplay between production and consumption. He focuses on the meanings of fashion, but he, too, helps to blur the distinctions between producing and purchasing. He characterizes fashion as a fundamentally political process of making and destroying meaning. Read together, Coffin and Barnard move us toward a richer understanding of the material and ideological connections between those who make and those who buy."

• • • •

Joanne B. Eicher, professor of design, housing, and apparel at the University of Minnesota and editor of *Dress and Ethnicity: Change across Space and Time* (Berg Oxford, 1995).

"Often the most alluring garments are those rarely seen. In ***Support and Seduction: A History of Corsets and Bras*** (Abrams, 1997), **Béatrice Fontanel** examines the different ways women's undergarments have girdled the waist, stomach, and hips and supported, enhanced, flattened, or exposed the breasts. Her lavishly illustrated text shows how undergarments have sculpted the armature of the female body to fit the clothing draped on it—often making women look more seductive and less natural. Fontanel documents not only fashion but also health concerns, such as fainting induced by tightly laced corsets. Although the book lacks footnotes, its bibliography includes French sources rarely cited by American or British authors."

JOHN PALATTELLA

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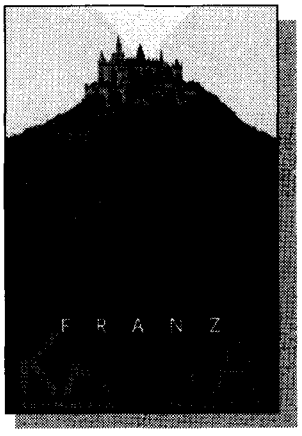

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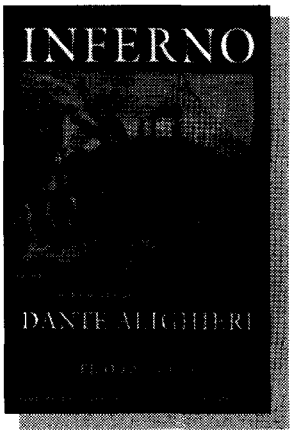

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Inside*Publishing*

SOAP & SOCIETY

THE SHARP UPWARD DRIFT OF THE AMERICAN hemline in the early years of this century has been variously attributed to the advent of the women's movement, moving pictures, dance halls, jazz, and—perhaps most ingeniously—Freud. (Don't repress, show some leg!) Now Nancy Tomes, a historian at SUNY Stony Brook, adds an unlikely new culprit to the list: microbes. In her provocative new history, *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life* (Harvard), Tomes advances the novel hypothesis that the hemline's initial retreat up the female ankle was motivated more by fear than daring. By the turn of the century, the assault against "the septic skirt" was in full swing, part of a national campaign to introduce what Tomes calls "bacteriologically informed cleanliness" into the American household.

In the 1880s, the microbe—long known but neglected by scientists—achieved new infamy as an infectious agent. No aspect of middle-class culture would ever be the same. Tomes shows how silverware, leftovers, drinking fountains, the drape-laden Victorian parlor, even facial hair came under suspicion as unwitting purveyors of filth and disease. While physicians took to the lecture circuit to rail against the microbe menace posed by the mustache, the beard, and the trailing hemline, public-health crusaders bombarded the populace with graphic images and slogans ("Sacrifice Whiskers and Save Children").

The scare tactics worked. In big cities, hygiene-minded housewives formed Rainy Day Clubs to promote dress reform—short skirts and high boots were de rigueur on germ-breeding wet days—and the clean-shaven youth soon supplanted the bearded gentleman as the icon of healthy, attractive modernity. "The revolt against the whisker has run like wild-fire over the land," gasped *Harper's Weekly* in 1907, while *Harper's Bazaar* complained that modern science's fixation on hemlines was turning fashion into "a grim demonstration of hygiene."

That the turn-of-the-century hygiene crusades yielded such dramatic results so quickly is impressive, given that the object of their wrath—the microbe—was, quite literally, invisible. It was partly this paradox that aroused Tomes's scholarly curiosity: "I was fascinated by the idea of getting so many different people to believe in something they couldn't see. Although there was a huge literature on germs in the history of medicine, no one had looked at how this notion was popularized."

Why did the clean-shaven youth supplant the bearded gentleman as an icon of modernity?

Indeed, although microbes had been observed in the laboratory as early as 1680, it was not until two centuries later that physicians thought to connect them with disease. Before the 1880s, many illnesses were mistakenly thought to be caused by spontaneously generated toxins in decaying waste, a phenomenon that, though also invisible, had to its proponents an unmistakable, literally sickening stench. Thus, sewer air was regarded as a greater potential health threat than human fingers and mouths.

In retrospect, this assumption appears tragically misguided. Tomes recounts how, when President James Garfield lay dying from an assassination attempt in 1881, rumors circulated in the press that the greatest danger to the president's health was not his suppurating gunshot wound but the malodorous sewer gas emitted by the decrepit White House plumbing system. Alarmed by these reports, Garfield's aides summoned a renowned sanitation engineer to the premises. And though Garfield died shortly thereafter, his successor, Chester Arthur, was able to convince the Senate

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to approve $300,000 to replace the old presidential mansion with a brand-new, sanitary dwelling. (Happily for posterity, the House of Representatives balked at the idea, and the measure was killed.)

When the new germ science finally emerged victorious in the 1880s, a throng of entrepreneurs and activists was poised to exploit its findings. Largely thanks to refinements in laboratory techniques, many of them pioneered by the German physician Robert Koch, bacteria were for the first time isolated by color and shape and their behavior observed at close range. Before long, the pathogens responsible for a whole phalanx of nineteenth-century ills—including diphtheria, typhoid, scarlet fever, pneumonia, leprosy, tetanus, and gonorrhea—had been identified, and an army of evocatively named antibacterial products was available to combat them. Business for one New York City toilet-disinfectant manufacturer, the Germicide Company, proved so lucrative that within a few years its uniformed inspectors had fanned out across the northeast.

But none of the germ-science discoveries had a greater impact on public life than the identification of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, to which Tomes devotes an entire chapter. Arguably the most famous, most romantic, and most virulent of nineteenth-century diseases, tuberculosis was still a leading cause of death, particularly among young people, at the turn of the century. Despite abundant empirical evidence to the contrary, common wisdom held that the disease was hereditary in origin. A massive public education campaign was therefore essential if the disease was to be eradicated. Tomes attributes the extraordinary success of the National Tuberculosis Association not just to the powerful politicians, doctors, and philanthropists who supported it but to the group's willingness to borrow the latest gimmicks and marketing ploys from business and advertising. Games, songs, plays, billboard ads, essay contests—"The germs are the Turks," opined one winning entry—and films disguised as light entertainment were created to teach people how to cough, sweep, mop, dust, wash their hands, and blow their noses. Testimony to the association's effectiveness: By the late 1920s, cancer and heart disease had replaced infectious diseases as the leading causes of death.

Is this the lesson of America's early battles with bacteria: that the right marriage of science and civic spirit can triumph over a common natural foe? Tomes is cautiously optimistic. The new germ theory certainly made for improved public health. But it was also, she writes, a "two-edged" sword. Occasionally blacks and the poor were able to parlay the fact that "the microbe preyed upon all bodies, regardless of their racial and social characteristics" into improvements of municipal services. More often than not, however, they were obliged to play on middle-class white prejudices (such as this statement from a U.S. Public Health Service doctor in 1909: "The Negro is the disease reservoir of the South").

Sadly, the fear of contamination from unclean others is hardly a thing of the past—Tomes cites the homophobia and racism associated with the AIDS epidemic. But there is reason to hope that these prejudices will fade. Now that academic and popular interest in social and household hygiene is growing, it turns out that no place is immune to the microbe's pernicious presence. To take just one example, consider the results of a Microbial Survey of Office Coffee Cups published in a recent issue of *Dairy, Food and Environmental Sanitation*. According to the authors—all researchers at the University of Arizona—the average office coffee cup contains at least nine potential pathogens, including, on occasion, the dreaded *E. coli*. Although evidently a cause for concern, the professors venture a reassuringly familiar remedy: "Bacterial contamination of used coffee mugs can be eliminated by using a dishwasher regularly."

EMILY EAKIN

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ARGUMENT BY DESIGN

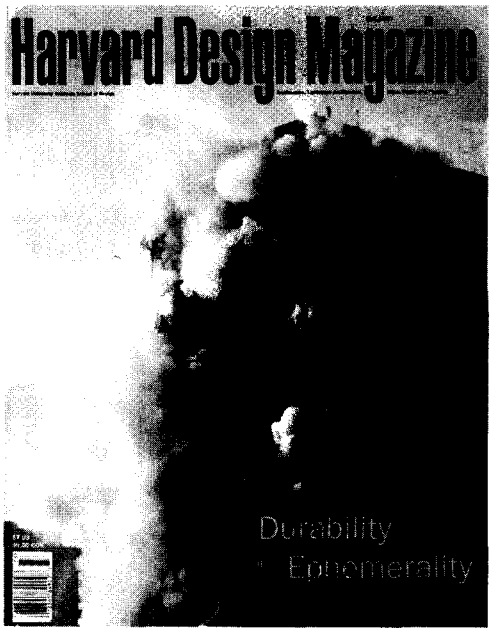
WHEN THE MUCH ADMIRED JOURNAL *Progressive Architecture* folded in January 1996, *The New York Times* critic Herbert Muschamp lamented that the remaining architecture magazines, bursting with glossy portfolios flattering the work of individual architects, were "not geared toward readers who think that architecture cuts much deeper than surfaces." Little did he know that Peter Rowe, dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Design (GSD), was positioning his school's alumni magazine to fill that gap.

Harvard Design Magazine (HDM) hardly looks like an alumni magazine—but it doesn't look much like a typical architecture magazine, either. Although it is handsomely produced in a large format that makes ample space for crisp, often striking photography, the magazine's eighty-eight-page issues are low gloss, two color, and mostly text. What's more, says editor William Saunders, an assistant dean at the GSD, "We have no reporters out there in the world reporting. That's not our mission at all." Instead, the year-old magazine features wide-ranging essays on the built environment and how it arranges—and deranges—late-twentieth-century life. Like *Progressive Architecture, HDM* aspires to be nothing less than the provocateur and conscience of the architectural profession.

Putting an academic spin on the current "special issue" craze in magazine publishing, each issue of *HDM* is devoted to a particular topic. The recent "Durability and Ephemerality" issue, for example, includes MIT professor Ellen Dunham-Jones's essay on the postindustrial disposable landscape, built and unbuilt by corporations without long-term commitments to people or places. She draws an uncomfortable parallel between this market-driven strip architecture and an avant-garde that also sees itself as a response to the needs and moods of the moment, the "-isms" that are in the end accorded only fleeting prominence. Neither aesthetic answers to the challenge contemporary architects face, as Dunham-Jones formulates it: How to shape public space without yielding to the mercenary interests of corporate clients?

In the same issue, Henry Petroski's "Of Books, Bridges, and Durability" offers another brief against the ephemeral. The Duke University engineering professor cautions that we breathlessly welcome the promise of new materials—from CD-ROMs to reinforced concrete—without fully taking stock of their dangers. New York City's Williamsburg Bridge, for example, was initially proclaimed a "colossal structure" that would "stand hundreds of years in unimpaired strength." Less than a hundred years later, the debate was over whether to repair or to replace a bridge that had failed to stand the test of time, due to both poor maintenance and the weakness of construction techniques that were novel in their day.

Other special issues have addressed changing cities, neglected design, and—most recently—popular places. While many of the contributions to the durability issue look ahead with trepidation, the entries in the popular places number are generally optimistic in spirit. For example, Harvard landscape development professor John Stilgoe makes a counterintuitive argument that the very processes Dunham-Jones decried—the Wal-Martization of the exurban landscape—have actually helped locally grounded buildings and businesses to flourish.



HDM aspires to be the provocateur and conscience of the architectural profession.

Stilgoe takes a look at the Blue Springs Café, located near Indianapolis off Highway 70 in the very building where a Stuckey's franchise had failed. Serving local specialties to a local clientele, the Blue Springs Café is doing a booming business. To the optimistic Stilgoe, its success signals the growth of a demand for definition over standardization. The Stuckey's, he points out, "was inevitably just one more Stuckey's." The Blue Springs Café, on the other hand, is popular precisely because it is uniquely local. And just as Wal-Mart first took root in the heartland, so, too, Stilgoe cheerfully foretells, will the emerging market for nonstandardized products and spaces spread to the rest of the country from the South and Midwest.

Also in the popular places issue, three contributors—Marshall Berman, Michael Sorkin, and Andreas Huyssen—chose to write about a more conspicuous space that crystallizes these debates: Times Square. The predictable dirge for the Square's bygone days, before Disney's arrival on the block, is not to be found in these three essays. Huyssen and Berman both recall former New York

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mayor Edward Koch's plan to build featureless office towers at Forty-second Street and Broadway, in order to replace the sex-industry traffic with a better-dressed crowd imported from Wall Street. Surely Disney is a more congenial neighbor: As Berman points out, the current Square retains its identity as a hub for mass entertainment and street life. At the same time, Berman's Times Square is more an archetype than an actual intersection in Manhattan. It symbolizes the release of human drives, both base and sublime—the discharge of a powerful kinetic energy, some of it sexual, some creative, and some consisting of the drive to "hustle" the products of our "wit and industry."

Neither Berman nor Huyssen worries that Times Square will sacrifice its electric diversity to its new corporate landlords. Sorkin, however, strikes a darker note, viewing the current "cleanup" as part of "the same hygienizing cycle that was brought to us historically by...exclusionary zoning and urban renewal." What Sorkin really laments is not the vanished sleaze—he emphasizes that he is no more comfortable seeing peep shows stand in for authenticity than he is accepting Larry Flynt as a First Amendment hero—but the very falseness of the Disney-or-sex-shops dichotomy, which he pins on the failure of progressive architects to come up with a better vision for Times Square's future.

If all this sounds a far cry from your alma mater's alumni magazine, it's because the editor of *HDM* has a refreshingly unconventional idea of what the mission of such publications should be. Says Saunders, "If an alumni magazine is to express the heart and soul of an educational institution, it should be looking not at the institution itself but at what the institution is dedicated to." Harvard sends the magazine to 7300 GSD alumni for free; nine thousand additional copies are sold by subscription and on the newsstand. The project is funded by the university in conjunction with three donors per issue and a small amount of advertising. Still, Saunders would like to put the publication's alumni orientation behind it. The next move? Within six months, he expects to expel all the alumni notes (currently about six pages at the back of the magazine) onto an insert not included with the newsstand copies. Campus events of general interest will still be covered—but the lay reader, according to Saunders, will no longer have to ask herself, "Why am I reading about someone in the class of 1972 having triplets?"

LAURA SECOR

CARROT AND SHTICK

Is Bugs Bunny a boy or a girl?

FOR PARENTS AND KIDS ALIKE, TV CARTOONS have always represented the antithesis of education—they're what you don't get to watch until you've finished your homework. But eight-year-olds everywhere should take heart at the publication of a new collection from Rutgers University Press, *Reading the Rabbit: Explorations in Warner Bros. Animation*. The book's scholarly contributors—communications and film professors, as well as animation-industry pros—take on the weighty philosophical conundrums of the Saturday-morning universe. Why doesn't the Daffy Duck on the Happy Meal box look quite like the Daffy Duck on TV? Is Bugs Bunny a boy or a girl? Keep asking these questions long enough, kids, and eventually you may get tenure.

Animation criticism has always been film criticism's poor relation. "Animation has not been viewed terribly seriously in the academy," says Kevin Sandler, a lecturer in film studies at the University of Michigan and editor of *Reading the Rabbit*. "It's seen as something that's for kids." Over the last few years, however, with the publication of several works on Disney, notably UC-Berkeley film studies professor Eric Smoodin's *Disney Discourse* (Routledge, 1994), that attitude has begun to change.

This rise in scholarly interest has been fueled by a major boom in the animation industry itself. The runaway success of the late-1980s movies *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* and Disney's *The Little Mermaid* signaled the beginning of a 'toon renaissance. Since then, Disney, which had practically stopped making animated films, has churned out cartoon musicals almost every year. Meanwhile, 1980s indie animators like *The Simpsons*' Matt Groening and *Beavis and Butt-Head*'s Mike Judge have taken their work mainstream. By the time *South Park* hit the airwaves last fall, the trend was confirmed: Irreverent, frenetic, unconstrained by social norms or the laws of physics, cartoons were a genre for the 1990s. And Warner Bros., which had stopped making Looney Tunes in 1968, promptly joined the fray, producing new animated shorts featuring Daffy Duck, Pepé le Pew, Road Runner, and Porky Pig.

With today's critical predilection for ambiguity and polysemous texts, it stands to reason that academic 'toon critics would turn their attention to the wacky antics of Bugs and Wile E. rather than

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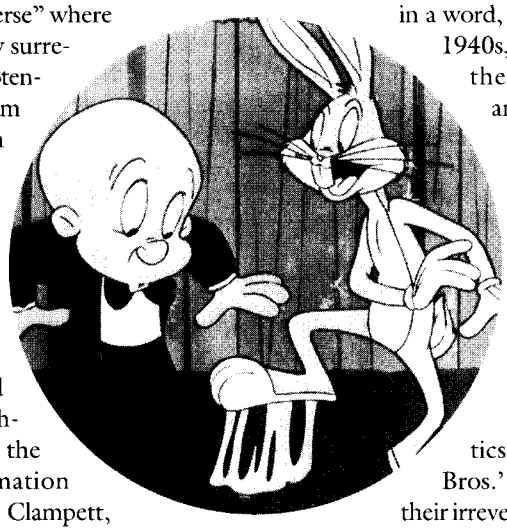
to the predictable morality plays of Mickey Mouse and Co. As Sandler notes in his introductory essay to *Reading the Rabbit,* since its inception Disney has "saturated the screen with sentimentality and hyperrealism." In contrast, Warner Bros. characters inhabit a "zany universe" where hyperrealism is replaced by surrealism and the mad kinetic potential of the animated medium is taken to extremes. An essay by Singapore-based Timothy White traces the origins of academic interest in Looney Tunes to the 1960s, when some American film theorists turned against the moral conservatism of Disney and started applying then-fashionable auteur theory to the great Warner Bros. animation directors: Tex Avery, Bob Clampett, Frank Tashlin, Chuck Jones, Friz Freleng, and Robert McKimson.



ARCHIVE PHOTOS

Some of *Reading the Rabbit's* most interesting essays address this juxtaposition of the Disney and Warner Bros. styles. University of Manitoba film professor Gene Walz's "Charlie Thorson and the Temporary Disneyfication of Warner Bros. Cartoons" examines the legacy of a character designer who was lured from Disney to Warner Bros. in the late 1930s. Thorson made Warner Bros.' characters more rounded, more three-dimensional, cuter—in a word, Disneylike. But by the early 1940s, his influence receded, and the characters achieved the angular, modernist look we know today. The single character who remains as Thorson designed him is—you guessed it—Elmer Fudd. Roly-poly Fudd, the eternal frustrated loser, thus stands as a satirized emblem of Disneyness within the Warner Bros. oeuvre.

But the very characteristics that differentiate Warner Bros.' cartoons from Disney's—their irreverent tone and antirealist aesthetic—are threatened by the commercial success of animation in the 1990s. As Cartoon Network executive Linda Simensky shows in "Selling Bugs Bunny: Warner Bros. and Character Merchandising in the Nineties," this decade's animation boom has primarily been a merchandising and

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licensing phenomenon. The revival of both Disney and Warner Bros. animation has been underwritten by new chains of Disney and Warner Bros. stores, which market toys, clothing, and animation cels (the acetate sheets on which the cartoonists draw) bearing the likenesses of wacky wabbits and pretty Pocahonti. Sandler argues that some Warner Bros. cartoons have become mere advertisements for the Warner Bros. retail chain—featuring characters who have become wholesome, family-friendly shadows of their former wisecracking selves.

Meanwhile, Warner Bros. has also set about hiding its past. The company has pulled a number of politically sensitive cartoons from the early 1940s from the video shelves. They include the violently xenophobic wartime propaganda shorts *Herr Meets Hare* and *Bugs Bunny Nips the Nips* and a blackface lampoon of a Disney feature, *Coal Black and de Sebben Dwarfs*. As Sandler puts it, Warner Bros. sees these cartoons as "toxins, ideological contaminants that must be suppressed" lest they damage the company's valuable brands.

At the same time, other old cartoons have been bowdlerized. TV networks' bureaus of standards and practices now prohibit the depiction of characters engaging in dangerous "imitable behavior" that some unwary tot might try out, subjecting the network to a hefty lawsuit. It is an absolute no-no to show a character drinking alcohol (or diesel fuel for that matter) or firing a gun at another character. Thus, in today's broadcast version of Chuck Jones's classic *Duck! Rabbit! Duck!*, Daffy no longer receives a shotgun blast from Fudd at point-blank range; all of the shooting takes place offscreen—as if that makes the cartoon any less violent.

Interestingly, Sandler says, taboos against violence are historically variable. "In the 1970s, for instance, critics successfully lobbied to censor Road Runner cartoons. But now those are the cartoons that are shown practically unedited." Parents seem to have decided, perhaps with the diminished fame of Evel Knievel in mind, that their children are unlikely to attempt to fly over Monument Valley on rocket-powered roller skates.

Another potentially unruly element at Warner Bros. is the sexually ambivalent, frequently cross-dressing Bugs Bunny. In his essay "Gendered Evasion: Bugs Bunny in Drag," Sandler argues that Bugs's heterosexual male identity is always reaffirmed by the end of the old cartoons, but in the meantime his playful transvestism forces the viewer to confront various transgendered situations, notably what Sandler calls "the temporary transvestite kiss." Bugs kisses Elmer Fudd much more frequently than he does any female character. In the movie *Space Jam*, this ambiguity is officiously resolved: We are introduced to Bugs's "girlfriend," Lola Bunny. What's up with *that*, doc?

So, is the aesthetic brilliance of the great Warner Bros. cartoons doomed to Disneyfication in this age of corporate branding and merchandising, as some of the authors in *Reading the Rabbit* suggest? There is, it must be said, something a little weird about the idea that the Warner Bros. characters constitute some kind of inviolable artistic statement that must be protected from the depredations of commercialism. These are, after all, cartoons.

Perhaps we would do well to consider a point raised early in *Reading the Rabbit*, in T.V. critic Barry Putterman's "A Short Critical History of Warner Bros. Cartoons." Putterman notes that the company's cartoon shorts—Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies—were initially conceived as devices to promote Warner Bros. lucrative music-publishing holdings. In the 1930s, Warner Bros. was buying up vast quantities of songs for its movie musicals; it needed fresh ways to market them. Cartoon shorts were the result—the music videos of their day. In other words, cartoons were originally just spin-offs—novel marketing devices. Maybe in fifty years a new subfield of retail critics will look back at the Warner Bros. stores of today and see in them the key artistic innovations of the 1990s.

MATT STEINGLASS

RADIOHEAD

LONG BEFORE CHAT ROOMS, LONG BEFORE poetry slams, there was Blabbermouth Night. Throughout most of the 1950s, Blabbermouth Night occurred every Monday at the Place, one of several saloons that doubled as a salon for the poets of San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood. Blabbermouth Night was a game, and its object was simple: A contestant would stand on a box and rant extemporaneously into a microphone, spewing forth a stream of jabberwocky. The contestants were judged according to the intensity of the crowd's hisses or cheers, with the evening's champion babbler winning a free drink or—occasionally—a magnum of champagne.

More importantly, the victor earned the respect of Jack Spicer, the impresario of Blabbermouth Night. Spicer was among the Bay Area's most revered poets, but unlike his equally esteemed East Coast contemporaries Allen Ginsberg and Frank O'Hara, he has garnered little attention since his death at the age of forty in 1965. The fault was partly his own. Suspicious of any publisher who reaped even the slimmest profit from

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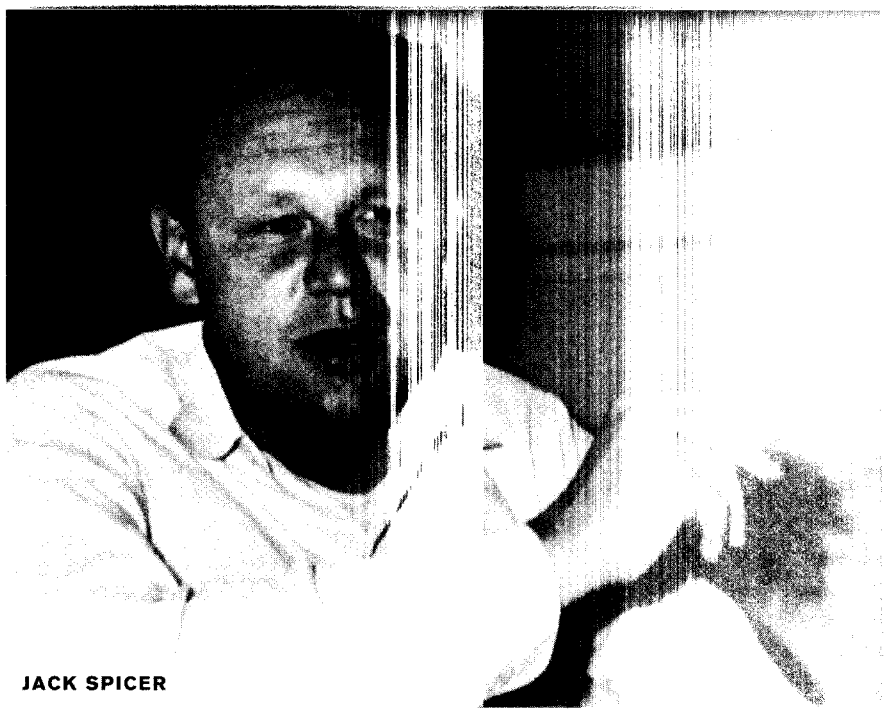
printing poetry, Spicer issued his books in tiny editions that he circulated only among a coterie of admirers in the Bay Area. Consequently, until his *Collected Books* was published by Black Sparrow Press in 1975, Spicer's work was virtually impossible to find. And even then, his oblique and syntactically unhinged poems were considered unfit for broader consumption—unlike those of some of his more confessional compatriots. After all, one reason Spicer savored Blabbermouth Night was that, like some of his poems, it lampooned the sort of spontaneous self-expression popularized by Ginsberg and O'Hara.

Over the last several decades, however, Spicer has gradually emerged from the shadows. Championed by avant-garde poets like Robin Blaser and Ron Silliman in the 1980s, his poems are now anthologized in several mainstream compendiums—most notably *Postmodern American Poetry: A Norton Anthology*, published in 1994. (The selection "Phonemics" begins: "No love deserves the death it has. An archipelago/Rocks cropping out of ocean. Seabirds shit on it. Live out their lives on it.") A handful of poems have drifted even further from their Bay Area moorings, appearing in translation in Mexico and France. Now several prose works by and about Spicer have



JACK SPICER

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appeared. The first biography, *Poet Be Like God*, by Lewis Ellingham and Kevin Killian, has recently been published by Wesleyan University Press, after circulating like samizdat among Spicerians for the last decade. Wesleyan has also just released *The House That Jack Built*, a collection of four lectures delivered by Spicer in Vancouver and Berkeley shortly before he died. Says the editor of the lec-

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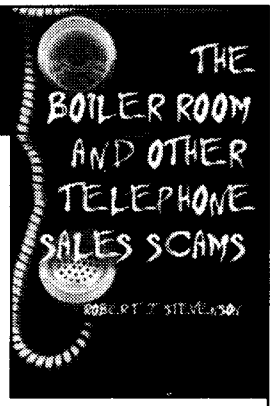

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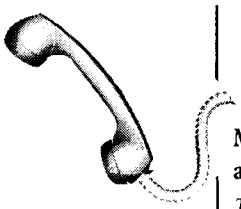
tures, Peter Gizzi, a poet and UC-Santa Cruz professor of literature: "Like Poe, Spicer is of that genus of American artists who are only marginally understood in their own period but whose work appears increasingly contemporary and increasingly necessary as time goes on."

The lectures are indispensable to Spicerians because they contain the only sustained exposition of his poetics outside the poetry and letters, the latter of which remain uncollected. The centerpiece of that poetics is a notion straight out of science fiction: The poet is a radio that receives dictation from what Spicer termed "the Outside." The poet is not a solitary genius, "a beautiful machine which manufactured the current for itself, did everything for itself," remarks Spicer in the first lecture. Rather, the poet is a radio receiver, "something which is being transmitted into." (Oddly enough, the poet who wanted to be a radio was kicked off the radio: In 1949 Spicer had to abandon his folk music program on KPFA in Berkeley after listeners complained about him singing obscene refrains to "Skip to M'Lou.") Spicer is vague about the exact source of the poet's radio transmission, allowing only that there "*is* something from the Outside. I mean you get this in Longinus for Christ's sake." The Outside is knowable only through what it transmits, which in Spicer's poems comes through as, among other things, statistics from baseball games, snatches of popular songs, legends about Billy the Kid, dialogues between Buster Keaton and the Virgin Mary, and echoes of *Mort d'Arthur* and the poetry of Federico García Lorca. Forgoing indulgent self-expression, Spicer advocates a demotic gnosticism: He immerses himself in cultural debris for hints of an unintelligible absolute.

Is the poet a radio receiver?

Though an invaluable addition to the Spicer canon, *The House That Jack Built* is as instructive for scholars as it is for Spicer enthusiasts. The poet's idea of transmission, or dictation, for instance, harks back to two great Irish modernists: W.B. Yeats, whose book of intricate historical cycles, *A Vision*, was supposedly dictated to him by his wife, Georgie; and Samuel Beckett, whose late work *Company* begins, "A voice comes to one in the dark. Imagine." (Gizzi's extensive notes suggest further correspondences between Spicer and other modernists.) And for all its sci-fi trappings, Spicer's notion of the poet as radio has a remarkably traditional poetic lineage. What is Spicer's disdain for



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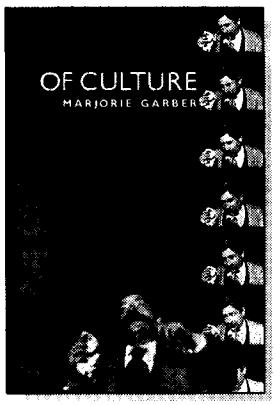

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the egotistical sublime and his susceptibility to the Outside if not an example of what John Keats called negative capability, a willingness to remain "in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason"?

Considering how steadfastly Spicer struggled to purge subjectivity from his poems and poetics, it's odd the lectures are being published simultaneously with a biography. But then again, reading the lectures alongside the life throws into relief a hard truth about radios that Spicer eventually grasped. "The trouble with comparing a poet with a radio is that radios don't develop scar-tissue," he declared in the poem "Sporting Life." In *Poet Be Like God*, the bulk of which details the most intimate aspects of the last decade of Spicer's life, Ellingham and Killian document exactly what Spicer meant. Spicer's love affairs, for instance, were especially bruising. Often, he would grow infatuated with a younger man who was usually enticed by his intellect and poetry. The two would become involved for a short spell, and then Spicer's lover would abandon him for a more attractive man or woman.

Hardly a diplomat, Spicer made sure he had no monopoly on feelings of humiliation. Ellingham and Killian recount one especially queasy episode from the early 1960s involving Spicer's close friends, Fran and James Herndon. At the time, Fran was fashioning lithographs to illustrate Spicer's work-in-progress. One evening, Spicer reminded Fran, in the presence of James, of a tawdry subject—that James had only recently ended a steamy affair. Then, having fomented antagonism between the two, Spicer started reading some new poems to them. Incredibly, he orchestrated the whole scene to guarantee himself the perfect audience: two people who wanted desperately to escape each other's company and would do so by listening to him read.

The final casualty of Spicer's poetry during his lifetime was himself—or so he claimed. In late July 1965, his body wracked by alcoholism, Spicer was admitted to the poverty ward of San Francisco General Hospital, where he remained until his death several weeks later. The garrulous poet could no longer speak; he could only blabber. Yet miraculously, during a visit from Robin Blaser, Spicer managed to utter two clear sentences: "My vocabulary did this to me. Your love will let you go on." Now, more than three decades later, a fundamental element of Spicer's corpus survives. But even Spicer knew it would. As he ventured in his book of poems *Language*, "Death is not final. Only parking lots."

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GETTING THEIR HANDS DIRTY?

ARCHAEOLOGISTS AND THE LOOTING TRADE

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JUSTIN KERR

INSIDE THE MUSEUM OF Fine Arts in Boston, in a small room with soothing blue-green walls, four glass cases enclose some of the most quarreled-over objects in archaeology today. They are Classic Maya ceramics—vases, bowls, and mugs for drinking *cacao*—decorated with startlingly intricate paintings and enigmatic hieroglyphs. One shows a corpulent priest-king dancing with a jaguar. The ecstatic lord is in mid-metamorphosis; his hands have turned into spotted jaguar paws. Another vase shows the mythical Hero Twins making an offering to the Lord of the Underworld inside a palace constructed out of huge hieroglyphs. Some of the pots are cream colored and inscribed with graceful script in dark outline—as if they were manuscripts transformed into crockery.

Last December, when MFA officials unveiled this glittering new collection, they were hoping to redress the venerable Brahmin institution's long-standing neglect of pre-Colombian art. But instead of receiving accolades for this gesture, the curators found their ethics under fierce attack. The accusation? Presenting the public with illegally obtained booty. QUESTIONABLE COLLECTION, blared *The Boston Globe*. Joining the fray, the Guatemalan government charged that the Maya artifacts had been illegally exported—and demanded their return. According to one Guatemalan official, the ceramics were "pages ripped out of the history book of our nation."

The museum fought back, haughtily declaring that its Maya collection had been legally obtained ten years ago from a trustee. But for many in the archaeology community, this claim was both depressingly familiar and woefully inadequate. Among scholars, it is widely acknowledged that any Maya artifact available for purchase by a collector has almost certainly been looted—that is, stolen by bandits who rob graves and other ancient sites in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and Belize. These objects are then smuggled to the United States and Europe, where art dealers and auction houses hawk them to collectors at enormous markups. Eventually, these collectors may give them to museums (for a huge tax write-off), where they can at last be seen by scholars and the public.

As a discipline, archaeology is sharply divided over whether museums should display these treasures—and over whether anyone, including scholars, should even look at them. After all, it is contended that the display and study of pilfered artifacts may make scholars complicit in the deadly business of looting—and critics can point to a rising body count to back up such claims. "Well before the showrooms and the black velvet, there are criminal acts of vandalism," says Claire Lyons, vice president of professional responsibility for the Archaeological Institute of America. "These people aren't kidding around; they regularly engage in threats and physical violence. It's a sordid and distasteful trade. Scholars must not validate or fund it." The concerns about looted objects are scholarly as well as ethical. As beautiful as they are, artifacts of uncertain origin have little or no historical value, critics argue, and exhibits like the MFA's are mere monuments to vanity, spectacles short on intellectual substance. Lacking reliable knowledge of an object's history, scholars have few means of understanding how it functioned in an ancient society. Clemency Chase Coggins, a Boston University archaeologist, told the *Globe* that "every single object in the MFA's exhibit represents incalculable loss to our knowledge of the Maya."

Yet not all archaeologists see the situation so starkly. By taking the moral high road and refusing to study looted goods, are scholars sacrificing invaluable opportunities to further their research? What good does scholarly abstinence do, anyway? Some Maya specialists have decided to take a more pragmatic approach. Although he has helped the FBI track down looters, Harvard Mayanist Ian Graham insists that "it's ridiculous to close your eyes" to striking new evidence. After all, like it or not, remarkable new things are being wrested out of the soil every day. So scholars like Graham have decided to risk some colleagues' wrath—by simply daring to look.

IN Central America, no known ancient site has managed to escape the plague of looting. Until last spring, the buildings at Naranjo, the second-most-mentioned city in the whole Maya hieroglyphic record, were still intact, ready to be excavated by archaeologists. But before scholars could begin their work this season, every building had been ransacked; the site was virtually obliterated. The theft is getting more frequent—and bloodier—as looting operations increasingly overlap with the drug trade and the military. Last September, armed looters attacked the site of Yaxhá in the rough Petén region of northern Guatemala. They wrenched a massive stone stela, or freestanding inscribed monument, out of the ground, put it on a truck, and drove off; a site guard was later found murdered. Last fall, at the small site of Tziquin Tzakan near the Belizean border, a site guard was killed by bandits in the process of digging a trench into the main building.

In Guatemalan slang, looters are known as *huecheros*—a term derived from the Maya word for armadillo, *huech,* because the thieves claw into the dirt with their hands. And indeed, looting today remains primarily a low-tech affair, a matter of pickaxes and powersaws. The typical looter is a poverty-stricken local who, while no connoisseur, knows that any intact pot with hieroglyphs is well worth the time and risk involved in plundering it. The Maya looting business is now huge—$120 million a year and growing—but the looters themselves get the short end of the stick, realizing perhaps a few hundred dollars for each piece. That may seem like a lot to them, but the real fortunes are being made by more worldly sorts, as looting becomes a variety of organized crime. Many looting kingpins are former army officers, and lately marijuana growers have gotten involved, using the networks they have created for trafficking drugs to transport antiquities. (From pot to pots!) In the atmosphere of lax enforcement and bribery that prevails in Guatemala, it is relatively safe and easy for them to export their ill-gotten prizes. They can sell one ceramic Maya vase for $20,000 or $30,000 to a dealer in New York City or Brussels, who in turn can sell it to a collector for over $100,000.

WITH SUCH nefarious goings-on in Central America, it's no wonder many Mayanists are concerned. For Clemency Coggins, the problem is not merely academic. She confesses to "an almost physical revulsion" to looted

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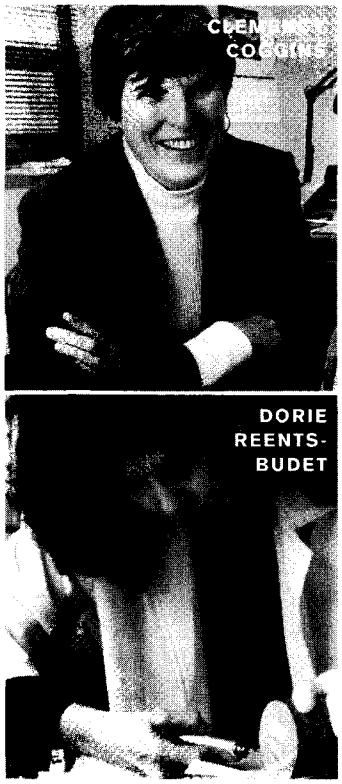
ceramics. "What outrages me the most," she says, "is the criminality of ostensibly respectable dealers. They should all be put out of business."

While a graduate student at Harvard in the 1960s, Coggins discovered that looted Maya artifacts were popping up in museums across the country. Concerned that there would be few Maya sites left to study if the traffic in stolen antiquities continued unabated, she wrote an article in *Art Journal* exposing the problem. "I was young and naive," she recalls. "I thought all one had to do was point this out to them. At that time, museums were still publishing lists of their acquisitions. They've since learned not to."

Her 1969 article became a sort of handbook on the subject, and she was asked by the American Society of International Law to serve on a committee whose task was to draft the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the illicit import and export of cultural property. That year, officials at the University of Pennsylvania's museum pledged to "purchase no more art objects or antiquities...unless the objects are accompanied by a pedigree." Other museums followed suit—but too often, the promise of the Pennsylvania Declaration has been honored in the breach. This January, it was reported that Harvard's Sackler Museum had recently acquired 182 Greek vases without documentation. Accordingly, Coggins has continued her often lonely campaign to shame dealers and get museums to change their accession policies. "The last ten years at BU," she says, "I've been sending my students to all the area museums to demand, as politely as possible, documents on whatever they're studying."

Coggins believes that her principles have exacted a professional toll. Without the slightest self-pity, she says: "In many ways it was professional suicide to do what I did. I've never had a museum appointment, and that's what I'm trained for; that's what I love. I haven't been able to work with the materials I want to study." Indeed, the logical outcome of the war against looted artifacts is self-deprivation, a kind of mortification of the spirit. Every so often, Coggins will view looted ceramics when she makes fact-finding expeditions to dealers—but she looks at them with a detective's eye, not a scholar's. "Each one is a little dead end of its own," she says regretfully. "It's not intellectually honest to study them." Mayanists who draw inferences from decontextualized pottery, she says, are just kidding themselves, "creating a self-referential science. It has a life of its own, disconnected from any historical reality."



THE MAYA historical reality has been slow to reveal itself, largely because of the loss of the vast majority of Maya writings, and because of the sheer intransigence of the culture's script. We now know that the monuments of Classic Maya civilization were produced between about 250 and 900 A.D., and after that the Maya—for some yet unknown reason—deserted their cities in the jungle lowlands of what is now Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras, and Belize. They moved to the highlands in the south and the upper Yucatán Peninsula in the north, where they no longer carved stone monuments but continued to practice their religion and write in hieroglyphs. This Postclassic Maya civilization, though politically weakened, continued to exist until the arrival in 1517 of the Spaniards, who burned as many books as they could get their hands on and conducted an extensive anti-literacy campaign to stamp out the Maya religion. But the Maya proved exceptionally tenacious—and simply took their culture underground. Not until 1697 was the last Maya kingdom subdued, and although the Indians adopted Roman Catholicism, they managed to retain many aspects of the old religion. Many still speak Mayan languages to this day. What they can no longer do, however, is read or write them—unless taught to do so by scholars, who themselves have only in the last twenty-five years been able to make much sense of hieroglyphic texts.

With so much irretrievably lost, it's no wonder Mayanists place such value on archaeological context. Clandestinely excavated objects lack what they call "provenience"; that is, a documented origin. Rudely ripped from the soil, looted artifacts are robbed of context and thus cast into a historical vacuum. In archaeology, context is crucial; such information gives archaeologists clues as to the date, ownership, use, and social significance of an object.

In her 1994 book, *Painting the Maya Universe* (Duke), Dorie Reents-Budet, a Mayanist who is the guest curator of the MFA exhibit, illustrates the importance of provenience by conducting a sort of thought experiment—examining a single artifact from two points of view. She considers the famous Buenavista Vase, discovered in 1988, and initially pretends that its origin is mysterious. What can the object alone tell us? First, we can see that the vase, depicting two triumphant young lords wearing elaborate helmets, is in a regional style called Holmul, distinguished by red and orange paint on a cream-colored background. Second, Reents-Budet notes, the hieroglyphs around the rim tell us that this is a mug for drinking *cacao;* also on the rim one finds the name of Lord K'ak'-Til, ruler of the city-state of Naranjo, in what is now Guatemala. Presumably, the vase was created for the lord's drinking pleasure.

Not bad, right? In fact, Reents-Budet reveals, we know exactly where the Buenavista Vase comes from. Instead of being found, as might be expected, in K'ak'-Til's tomb at Naranjo, the vase was dug out of a tomb on top of a pyramid at the smaller, less important site of Buenavista del Cayo, in Belize. Also in the tomb were the remains of an aristocratic adolescent boy. What happened here? Potsherds found in the pottery workshops at the site show a far less sophisticated style than that of the Buenavista Vase, indicating that it wasn't made there but brought from Naranjo. Accordingly, Reents-Budet infers that it was a gift from the lord of Naranjo to the lord of Buenavista, signifying the

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EVERY LOOTED OBJECT IS "A LITTLE DEAD END OF ITS OWN," SAYS CLEMENCY COGGINS. "IT'S NOT INTELLECTUALLY HONEST TO STUDY THEM."

latter's acceptance of vassal status. The name of K'ak'-Til on the vase signifies not that it was for his personal use but that it was a symbol of his power, a chain to bind the possessor to him. In fact, writes Reents-Budet, since the monuments at Buenavista are too eroded to be read, "the Buenavista Vase is our only surviving documentation of the historical connections between these two sites."

The contextual information here undoubtedly enlarges the picture and corrects wrong impressions. Indeed, Reents-Budet holds that when an object is looted, 95 percent of the historical information it could give is lost. One Mayanist, John Henderson of Cornell, goes even further. "Looted pieces have no research value," he says, "only aesthetic value—and they don't have to be ancient to have that." In a similar spirit, Clemency Coggins blames the art-appreciation crowd for the problem. "There's an aesthetic-versus-cultural division here," she says. "One takes the short-term view—connoisseurship—and can't appreciate the broader view that sees the objects in historical context."

WHAT upstanding archaeologist could argue otherwise? In fact, numerous Mayanists believe that there are great scholarly rewards to be had from studying looted objects and wouldn't think of refusing to work on one. Their interests tend to be art historical or linguistic; looted pots are of use to them because they are more concerned with iconography or decoding a language than with reconstructing patterns of social life, as field archaeologists are.

The undisputed champion decoder today is David Stuart of Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. Now a mere thirty-three years old, his career as an epigrapher started at age eight, when he began accompanying his Mayanist father, George, on digs. Stuart, who was artistically inclined, began sketching what he saw on stone monuments, and thus, as he puts it, "Maya glyphs were imprinted on my growing brain cells." Like Jean-François Champollion, who cracked the code of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs,

JUSTIN KERR

ROLL-OUT PHOTOGRAPH OF THE BUENAVISTA VASE

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Stuart was destined both by nature and by nurture for his mission as a decipherer. Not only does he have tremendous linguistic facility and a photographic memory, he is the only Mayanist to have learned his trade as a child.

"I work with looted objects routinely in my research," says Stuart. "I have no qualms about using material if it's going to be scientifically useful. If I'm looking for a glyph—say, the glyph for 'cave'—I'm going to look for as many examples as I can get." (Maya epigraphers like to see glyphs in as many contexts as possible; the script is highly varied, and one glyph may be drawn in quite different ways by different scribes.) On the context issue, Stuart's views are clear-cut: "So-called dirt archaeologists do things like survey sites and study settlement patterns and ceramic chronology; they tend to see objects taken out of context as useless. They're not aware of the intrinsic usefulness of visual material because they haven't been trained that way. There are different subcultures in the discipline, and that's where a lot of the intellectual debate comes in."

To be fair, Stuart admits to having certain reservations. "Say a vessel has recently been on the art market, and it's important for its mythological or historical scenes," he proposes. "There's this temptation to say, 'Hey, great! I'll put it in my next paper.' The catch is, once you publish an object, it gets a certain reputation, and that contributes to the price of the object. I don't want to influence pricing. It's a dilemma." Of course, when prices increase, so does looting—and so does the amount of blood spilled in the process. Clean hands thus become impossible even for the purest-hearted scholar.

ON the horns of these dilemmas, David Stuart seems resigned. But Michael Coe, now a professor emeritus of anthropology at Yale and an elder statesman of Mayanism, is downright pugnacious. He refers to anti-looting activists like Clemency Coggins as having a puritanical "Mrs. Grundy attitude." He is equally scornful of "dirt archaeologists who are happier with chip-stone tools than with art, which they have no interest in." He likes to tell the story of an archaeologist who said that he would rather see looted objects "ground up into powder" than studied. The way Coe sees it, looting is virtually a nonissue for scholars—a perennial activity that will go on with or without them. Author of *Breaking the Maya Code* (Thames and Hudson, 1992) and coauthor of the new *Art of the Maya Scribe* (Abrams), Coe would rather focus on the insights to be had by simply looking at pots, context be damned. "If you have the Rosetta Stone, provenience doesn't matter! It's *content!*" he thunders. "Sure, it would be nice to know where the Maya vases I study came from, but now we can often know that from reading the glyphs."

Coe has never actually done fieldwork on the Maya. He prefers what he calls "armchair archaeology": namely, interpreting the objects retrieved by dirt archaeologists. "Anyone can go and dig," he says. "I like making sense of what people have dug up." Then again, some of Coe's critics say that his stay-at-home methods may also be a result of the resentment he's inspired in Latin America. Recently, the Mexican government, incensed at him for criticizing their excavation policies in *Breaking the Maya Code,* issued what he calls a "fatwa" against him, banning him from publishing articles there. "I'm the Salman Rushdie of Mayanists!" he chortles. Coe has also alienated many of his U.S. colleagues, who find his attitude toward looting both cavalier and offensive.

The advantages and disadvantages of Coe's approach were displayed at the controversial exhibit that he mounted in 1971 at New York City's Grolier Club, a haven for book collectors. Titled "The Maya Scribe and His World," the show presented an impressive collection of hieroglyphic ceramics from the Classic period. Coe convincingly argued that the iconography of many of the ancient pots represented scenes from myths later recorded in the *Popol Vuh,* the sixteenth-century religious text of the highland Quiché Maya. Coe's exhibit dramatically underscored the continuity of Maya thought over time. Not only that, these ceramics significantly enlarged our understanding of the *Popol Vuh* itself, which is believed to be a fragment of a greater myth cycle. Some of the underworld scenes on the Grolier pots appear to illustrate lost episodes from this original story.

Of course, to arrive at such revelations, Coe had to consort with private collectors and dealers. Rather than vet artifacts for provenience, the Yale professor blithely threw together the best stuff he could get his hands on. "I approached collectors and dealers I knew around New York," Coe recalls, "and they were very generous." While most Mayanists frown on private collectors, Coe welcomes them, encouraging them to make what he calls a "contribution to the field."

Coe's 1971 exhibit also included a spectacular codex, or illustrated manuscript—one of only four that survived the Spanish autos-da-fé, and the only one discovered in the twentieth century. The Grolier Codex, a fragment of an almanac tracking the rising and setting of Venus (Venus figures as a malevolent celestial body in Maya mythology), attracted more notoriety than any other object in the exhibit. For years, it was denounced as a forgery—the find seemed suspiciously momentous—but carbon dating has shown that its pages are from about 1230, just right for its stylistic period. It is now generally accepted as genuine. Even so, the codex came to light under the shadiest of circumstances: In 1966, Dr. Josué Saenz, a wealthy

GEORGE STUART AND THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

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MICHAEL COE

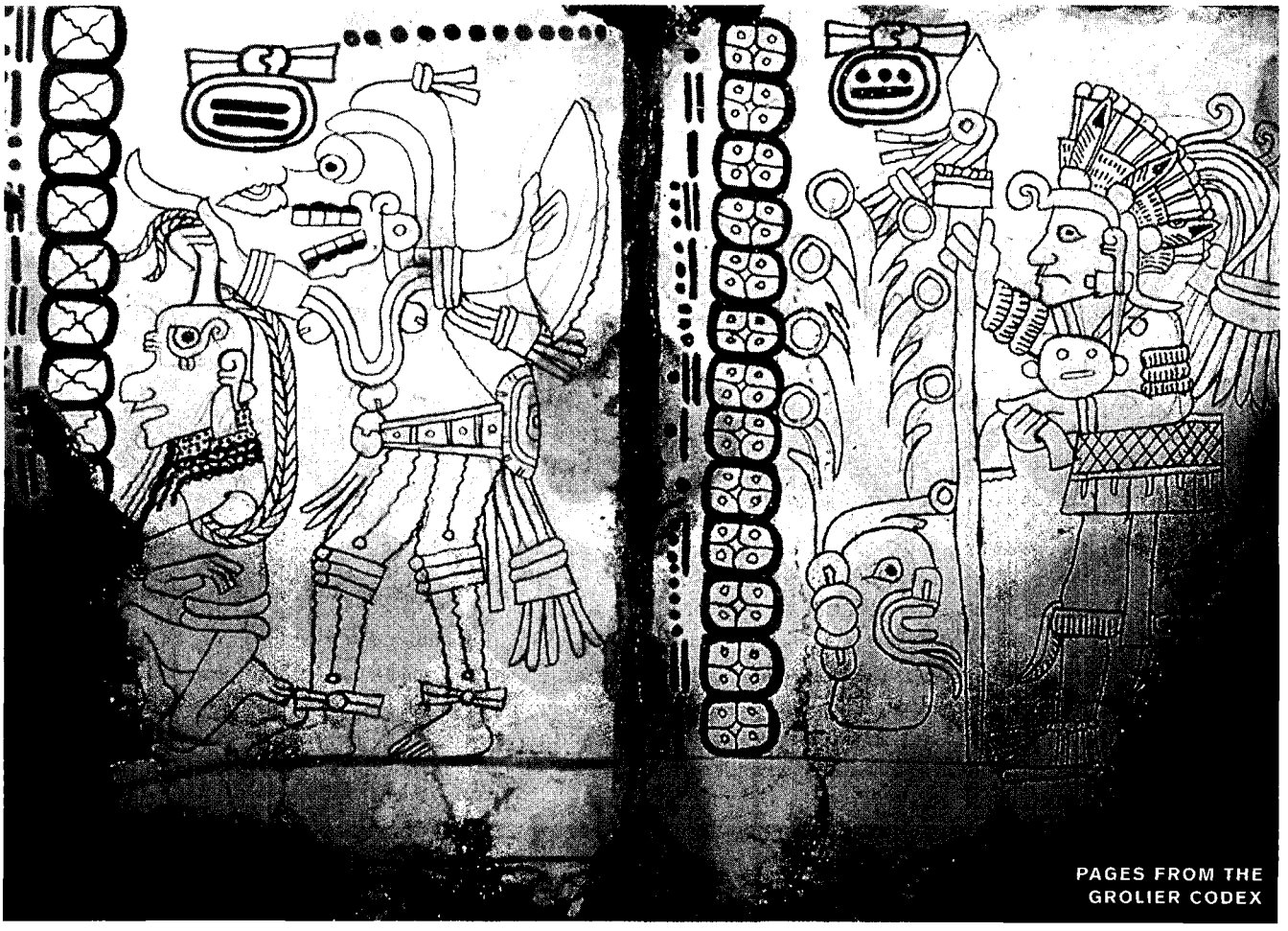
MICHAEL COE ACCUSES ANTI-LOOTING ACTIVISTS OF MISGUIDED PURITANISM. "IF YOU'VE GOT THE POSHTA STONE, PROVENIENCE DOESN'T MATTER

Mexican collector, received a series of anonymous phone calls saying that "good news" awaited him if he would just take the next flight to Villahermosa, in the southern Mexican state of Tabasco. He promptly did so and was met at the airport by two men who took him on board a Cessna. Although they covered the small plane's compass with a piece of cloth, Saenz could tell that they were flying in the general direction of the Chiapas highlands, an area near Guatemala with a large Maya population. When Saenz and his escorts landed on a crude airstrip in the middle of the jungle, a party of peasants approached carrying various objects—including the codex—which they claimed to have discovered sealed inside a wooden box in a nearby cave. Saenz bought the codex and flew it back to Mexico City. Coe heard about it and headed down to Mexico, persuading Dr. Saenz to lend the priceless book to the Grolier Club.

Because it's a book—and a decipherable one—the codex has tremendous value despite its lack of provenience. Even so, that cave in Chiapas tantalizes. Was the codex placed there recently, or could it have been hidden there during the Spanish Conquest? Unfortunately, since the location of the cave itself is lost, and there are thousands of dry caves in the area, we will likely never know the codex's true history.

Nevertheless, Coe feels good about his Maya exhibit. "Putting together that show was an eye-opener for me," he says. "I'd never seen so many pots together in one place. I began to see patterns." He explains that the pots' connection with the *Popol Vuh* occurred to him only after observing certain motifs, like the mythical Hero Twins, over and over again. "It was like a blowout at an archaeological site, when a big wind comes and concentrates the artifacts in one spot," he enthuses. "It was a critical mass of stuff, and it never would have happened if I hadn't had the cooperation of collectors and dealers."

. . . obviously relishes the game of *épater les bourgeois;* but other scholars and curators who work with looted goods are more troubled by their flirtations with the antiquities trade. Although Dorie


PAGES FROM THE GROLIER CODEX

MICHAEL MARSLAND/YALE UNIVERSITY (ABOVE); JUSTIN KERR (BELOW)

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IN GUATEMALA, GRAHAM AND HIS GUIDES WERE ATTACKED AND FIRED UPON BY A RAGTAG BAND OF LOOTERS AT THE SITE OF LA NAYA. ONE OF THE GUIDES WAS SHOT AND DIED IN GRAHAM'S ARMS.

Reents-Budet, the MFA guest curator, features unprovenienced material in the Maya exhibit, she has her scruples. For her, the ethical boundary line was drawn in 1983, the year the United States bound itself by federal law to honor the UNESCO Convention, which stipulates that participating nations only import cultural properties that were legally exported. "For me, 1983 provides a reasonable framework," she says. "One reason I agreed to do this project is that the MFA agreed to abide by the 1983 law. They've refused many gifts in the last five or ten years because the owners didn't prove when they got them." Similarly, Reents-Budet has refused to publish articles on objects where there is some uncertainty about the import date. "There was a ceramic vessel from Río Azul with a fine hieroglyphic text," she recalls somewhat wistfully. "It might have come in in 1982 or 1983, but it was too damn close. It was *hot*, and I wasn't going to touch it."

Of course, scrutinizing Maya antiquities for exact import dates is far from easy. Rarely, if ever, do they leave Central America accompanied by proper paperwork. Consider the MFA's holdings. They are actually part of a larger group of artifacts known in the art world as the November Collection. This hoard of about 150 ceramics was assembled in Florida—most likely during the 1970s—by one John B. Fulling, the head of a curious entity called the November Corporation. In the early 1980s, November Collection wares were shown around the country in such diverse venues as the University of Virginia and Disney's EPCOT Center. Not long after, most of the collection was acquired by Landon T. Clay, the MFA trustee, who stored his acquisition in the basement of the museum for several years before officially donating it, in 1988. Back in 1981 and 1982, many of these items appeared in two books by Francis Robicsek, an eccentric North Carolina cardiologist and collector whose interest in the Maya is rumored to have been piqued when he heard of their practice of open-heart human sacrifice. (Michael Coe contributed a foreword to one volume.) So these artifacts have a documented history in the United States prior to the 1983 witching hour.

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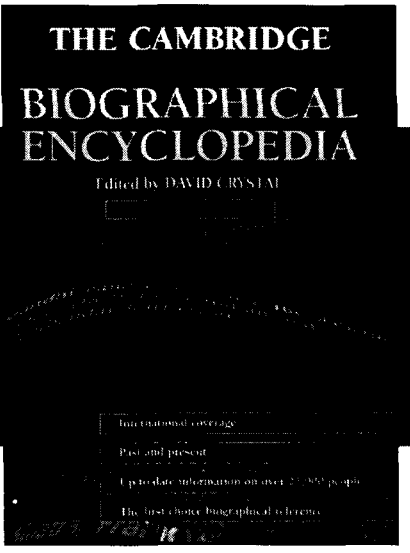

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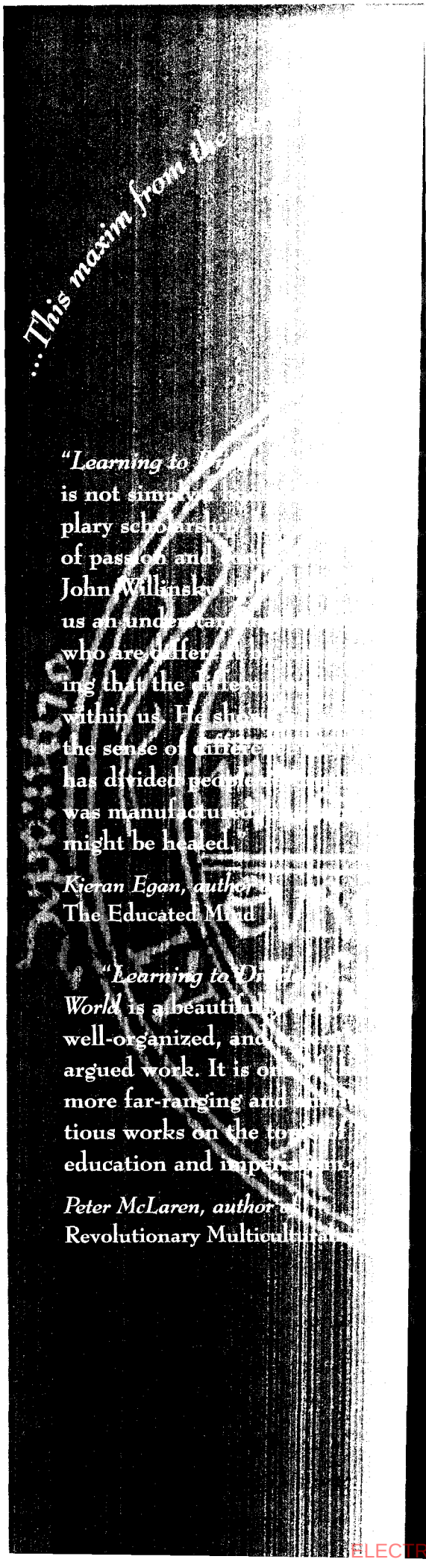
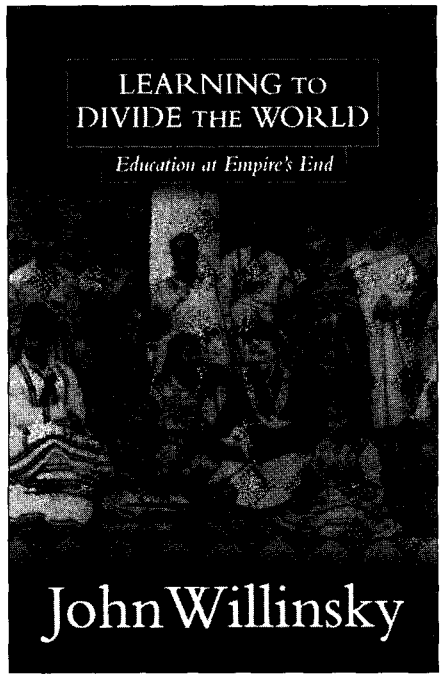


makes explicit the usually hidden connections



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JOHN WILLINSKY

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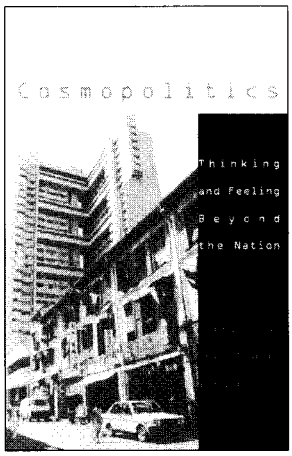

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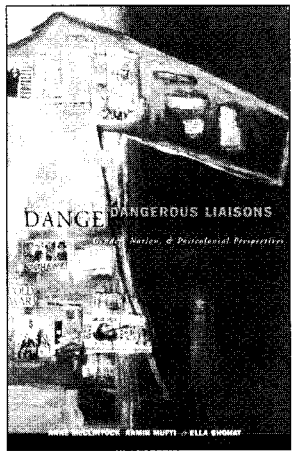

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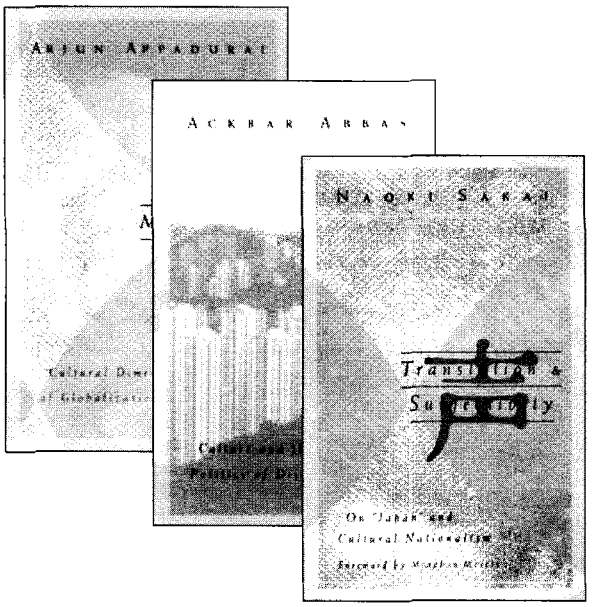

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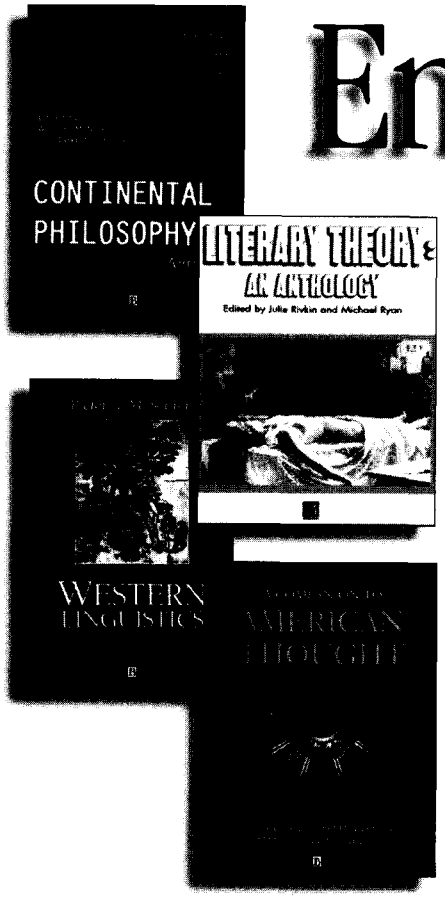
JOHN DORFMAN; INSET, RICHARD FRANK

But wait. Guatemala has had laws against the export of artifacts without a permit since 1947, and no one in the field thinks it even remotely possible that the November objects came in before then. So the collection, even if *imported* legally, was clearly *exported* illegally. While the MFA probably broke no law, the ethical problems cannot be so easily banished.

In a glossy MFA brochure accompanying the exhibit, the museum delicately handles the question of provenience. "All of the objects in this gallery," begins one section, "came into this country prior to the 1983 Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act.... It is hoped that laws such as these, along with the continued education of the public, will bring to an end the looting by which objects continue to appear on the international art market, stripped of the stories they could tell."

PERHAPS no one has more stories to tell about looting than Ian Graham, the director of the [illegible] rous Program at Harvard's [illegible] Museum. (He works closely there with David Stuart.) At seventy-four, Graham has lived through thirty-eight years of mostly solitary work in the jungles of Central America, transcribing as many hieroglyphic texts as possible onto paper. The project's ultimate goal is to record and publish every stone carving that include hieroglyphs. Creating such a corpus has itself been an act of defiance against looters, who were breaking apart and selling off the written record of the Maya at the very same time that Graham was trying to save it. He has also been monitoring the whereabouts of looted sculpture as it turns up in private collections and museums around the world; he's even taken on thieves and dealers directly, conducting his own investigations and



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alerting police and the FBI to their operations. In one case, his testimony resulted in two convictions in U.S. federal court.

But Graham hasn't won every battle. In 1971, he and his Guatemalan guides were attacked and fired upon by a ragtag band of looters at the site of La Naya in the Petén. One of the guides was shot and died in Graham's arms.

"The first time I came across looting myself was in 1962," Graham recalls. "I went to Dos Pilas in Guatemala but was beaten to it, unfortunately, by a Russian." Graham initially believed the charming foreigner to be a legitimate archaeologist, but he was soon disillusioned: "When I went back two years later, I got to a stela and jacked it up and found that the top two rows of hieroglyphs had been neatly sawed off. Well, I eventually found out where the glyphs were. They belonged to an importer of whiskey living on upper Fifth Avenue, so I called the guy, and he was agreeable to my visiting them. I saw how much he appreciated the pieces because he'd had marble stands made for them, and custom-made verticals of wrought iron, and clips to hold these things, and they were in the place of honor by his fireplace." The panels were upside down.

Graham tells these kinds of stories with a smile now, but the truth is that looters inspire in him tremendous indignation. As for the collectors, he finds them contemptible, not just because of their ignorance and bad taste but because of the damage they do. Many times, he has had to resort to piecing together composite pictures of monuments that fell prey to looters' saws. Half of a stela may be standing in place at its site, while the other half, sawed off and smuggled, may be thousands of miles away. Recognizing that they form one object can hard enough, but reuniting the pieces physically may be even harder. In the Cleveland Museum of Art there is an important stela, from El Perú in Guatemala, that is missing its base. In the 1970s, as a result of an FBI investigation that he helped launch, Graham was shown photographs of the missing piece, which was in the living room of a major airline executive in San Diego. Graham telephoned the executive, asking to get more detailed photographs. He was flatly rebuffed.

Graham doesn't particularly relish the role of anti-looting crusader. In fact, he confesses, "I think I would rather try to lose some of my notoriety as a campaigner in this field, because it does prevent me from gaining entrance to certain things." Graham's main concern is scholarly access—although he won't go as far as Michael Coe does to get it: "People like Coe are so impatient for scrumptious data that they're blinkered to the damage that is done." Still, he says, the idea of refusing to look at an object because it was looted is absurd. "However much I despise the trade in pottery and stelae, from the decipherment point of view there's an enormous value to be got from a text, even if you have no idea where it comes from."

Scholars who anguish over every object, Graham suggests, can sometimes get out of hand. In 1986, Graham was asked to help develop an issue of *National Geographic* devoted to the excavation at Río Azul in Guatemala. Richard Adams, the head of the excavation—and a hard-core purist on the provenience issue—became extremely upset when he found out that the magazine wanted to use a photo of a striking jade mask for the cover. The mask belonged to a private collector—and Adams didn't want the public ever to see this tainted object. A compromise was reached, says Graham: "They showed a watercolor version instead." The distinction has a rather Talmudic subtlety, because the artist did such a fine job that it takes a careful look to notice that it is, in fact, a painting. Ironically, a photograph of the mask had already appeared two years earlier in the catalog of Edward Merrin, a prominent New York dealer. In the end, connoisseurs got to see the real thing, the public a mere rendering.

Such absurdities make Graham's pragmatism seem refreshing by comparison. Archaeologists are scholars, not politicians. Why deny yourself key information to protest a criminal system as vast as the antiquities trade?

EVEN so, the ugly methods of the looting business can't give anyone in academia much comfort. Consider an event that recently took place in Carmelita, a rural town that has become a base of operations for looters in Guatemala. Carlos Catalán, a sometime *chiclero*, jaguar hunter, and expert looter, had been thrown in jail for his crimes in 1994. During his incarceration, Catalán became interested in ecology and in his Indian heritage; he began to study history and archaeology with passion. It was a conversion experience: He suddenly saw the objects that he had previously stolen as full of history and fascination. Upon his release, he began working with eco-tourism groups and archaeologists, became a vocal opponent of looting, and aided police in their efforts to track down its perpetrators. In 1996 he helped guide scientists and members of a group called Conservation International to a previously unknown site, now named La Corona.

Although looters had beat them to it, La Corona still had secrets to reveal. Last May, on a stela there, David Stuart discovered the name of a ruler that is mentioned in only one other place—on a carved tablet, now in the Art Institute of Chicago, that was looted from a mysterious place known as "Site Q." This site has not yet been found; archaeologists know of it only from shattered fragments of stelae in various museums. The fragments have in common a curious snakehead emblem glyph, which, when deciphered, will probably yield the name of the site. Although Catalán did not lead scholars to Site Q itself, Graham believes he brought them very close.

The search goes on, but Catalán will not be part of it. Just weeks after Stuart and Graham's visit, he was gunned down in the streets of Carmelita by a looter.

John Dorfman is on the staff of *The New Yorker*. He has written for *Archaeology* and other publications.

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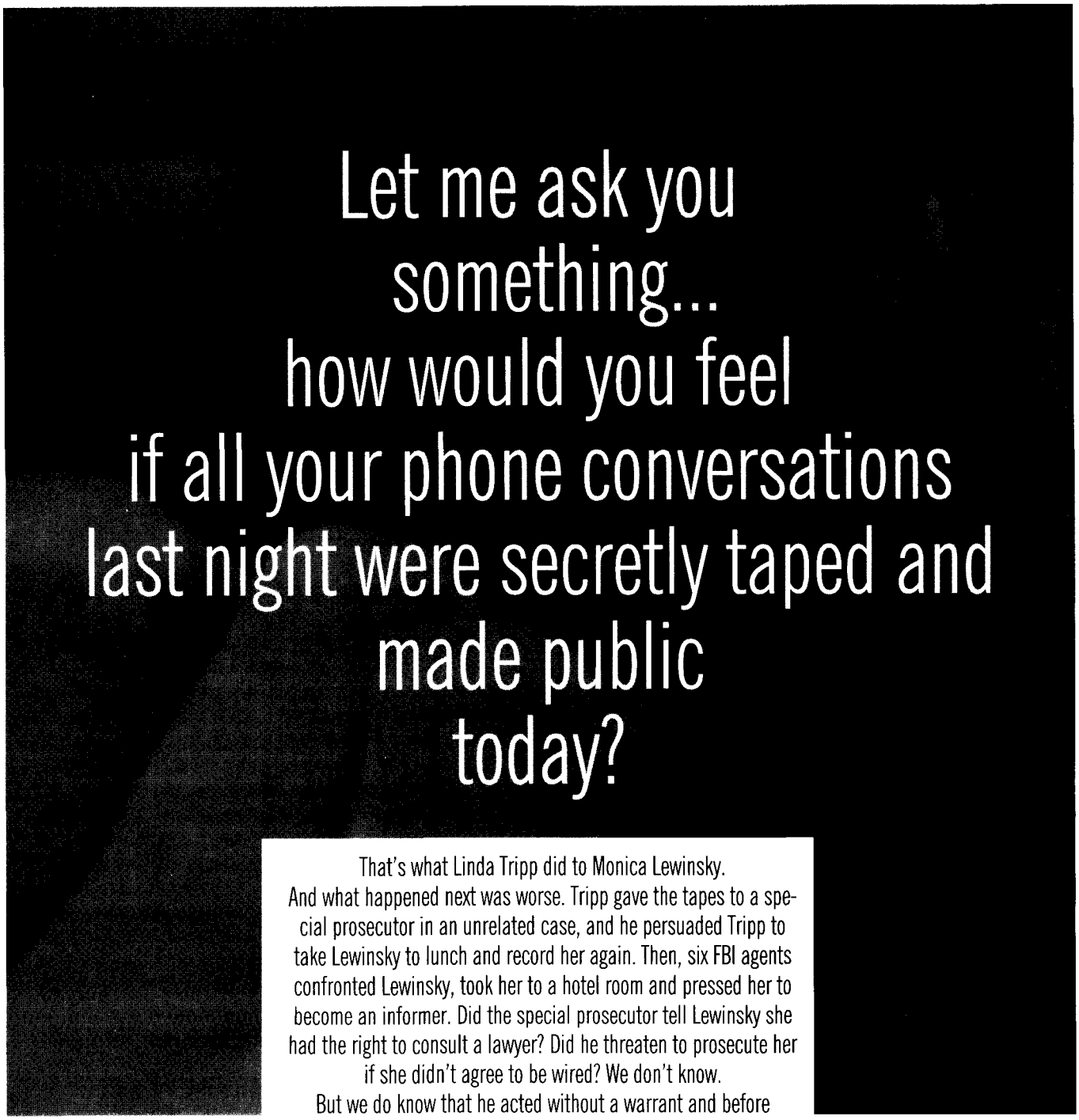

Let me ask you something... how would you feel if all your phone conversations last night were secretly taped and made public today?

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And what happened next was worse. Tripp gave the tapes to a special prosecutor in an unrelated case, and he persuaded Tripp to take Lewinsky to lunch and record her again. Then, six FBI agents confronted Lewinsky, took her to a hotel room and pressed her to become an informer. Did the special prosecutor tell Lewinsky she had the right to consult a lawyer? Did he threaten to prosecute her if she didn't agree to be wired? We don't know.
But we do know that he acted without a warrant and before he had even obtained jurisdiction in the case.
This may be legal. But is it right?
Should such betrayal by a friend or such conduct by a prosecutor be encouraged by the law? Do you want to live in a society where you have to wonder about the privacy of your conversations with close friends?
Think about it.

Ira Glasser
Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union
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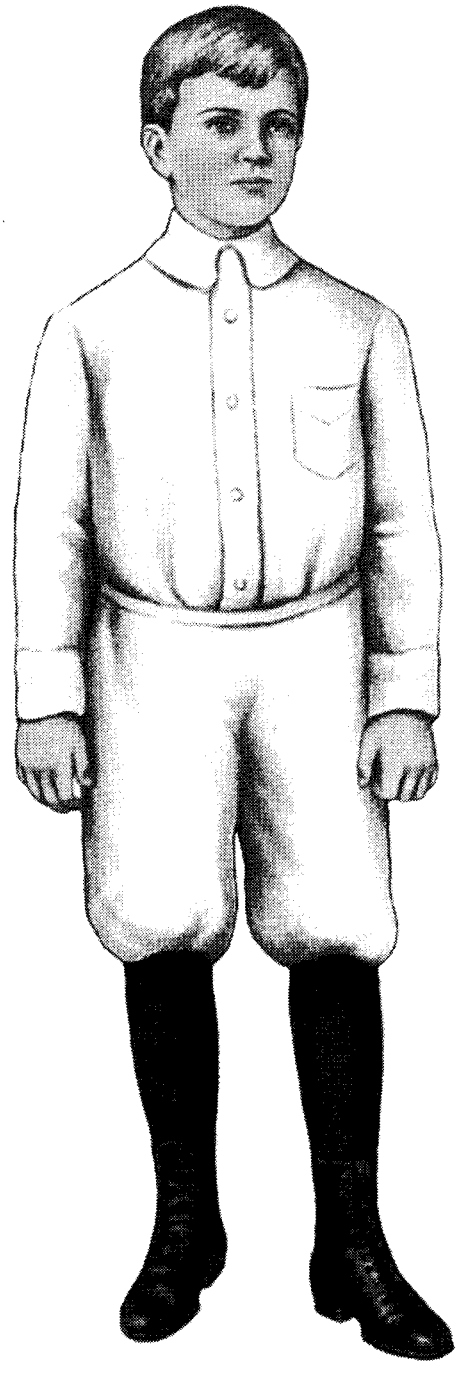

DOES THE EXOTIC BECOME EROTIC? A CORNELL PSYCHOLOGIST'S BOLD NEW THEORY ABOUT WHO'S GAY AND WHY

BY **EMILY NUSSBAUM**

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"WHEN MY WIFE SAW THIS APARTMENT for the first time," says Cornell social psychologist Daryl Bem, showing me into his elegant living room decorated with a tall Chinese screen, red lacquered coffee table, and polished piano, "she said, 'Well, this really looks like the apartment of a gay man.'" He flashes an ironic smile. Medium height with olive skin and slight bags under his liquid brown eyes, Bem resembles an empathic therapist more than any gay archetype; he's soft spoken and self-mocking, swaddled in a nondescript brown sweater and gray slacks. He pads in stocking feet up to the second floor, pointing out the framed posters (Keith Haring, Benetton boys), a collection of Beanie Babies given to him by his grown children, an office piled with papers.

When we sit down with the tape recorder in his study, he engages in some self-scrutiny: "Listening to myself makes me realize what a gay contour there is to my voice. The pitch goes up and down more than it does for so-called real men." Is he being serious? Or is he parodying himself? A bit of both, perhaps. In any event, Bem has a tremendous interest—and investment—in sussing out what he terms "gender nonconformity." It's at the crux of his controversial new theory: the Exotic Becomes Erotic (EBE) model of sexual orientation.

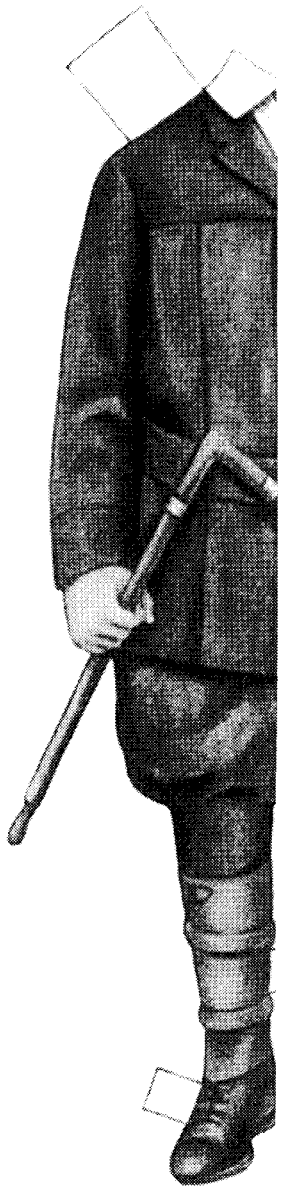
Bem's snazzily titled theory is a bold attempt to reclaim for psychologists the discussion surrounding the origins of sexual orientation—one that's been dominated for the last decade by rampaging geneticists and neurobiologists. Finding after finding—from Dean Hamer's discovery of the "gay gene" to Simon LeVay's revelation of size differences in the hypothalamus—has jumped with alacrity from the lab to the headlines. Until this year, such findings centered only on male homosexuality. But in February, the first biological difference between lesbians and straight women received the full-press courtship: A new study demonstrated that the inner ears of lesbians emitted fainter "clicks" than those of straight women, ostensibly because of the influence of androgens in the womb.

Such revelations have helped to elbow psychological notions about sexual orientation out of the picture, associated as they are with a barbaric history of attempts at "curing" same-sex desire. The American Psychiatric Association stopped calling homosexuality a mental illness only in 1973. And early-childhood-development theories—both the vampiric notion that homosexuals must be victims of molestation and the classic Freudian family constellation, in which male homosexuals are the unhappy product of an overbearing mother and a weak, rejecting father—have similarly been discarded, both because they'd been disproved by clinical studies and because they were deemed homophobic. Meanwhile, as psychologists stumbled, the biological/genetic approach picked up speed: Indeed, everything from alcoholism to a penchant for skydiving is now suspected of lurking inside the shadowy curves of DNA. Why shouldn't sexual orientation be next? "The public can be forgiven for believing that we are but one government grant away from pinpointing the penis preference gene," Bem wrote in his EBE manifesto, published in *Psychological Review*. "But before we all become geneticists, biopsychologists, or neuroanatomists, I believe it's worth another try."

Bem's puckish provocation has an edge of urgency. If social psychologists simply slink off to the sidelines, he suggests, they'll lose more than just a disciplinary tug-of-war. The public will increasingly ignore the nuances of sexual identity and the vagaries of erotic experience. Sexual orientation will be viewed as a matter of a simple on/off switch—comparable to hair color or diabetes—and research will shift toward Frankensteinian tinkering in the lab. More than anything, then, Bem is playing the gadfly, seeking to undermine the gay genies by reinterpreting their data with a social psychological twist. "My whole career has consisted of solving puzzles," Bem explains, curled on the sofa with his legs pulled under him. "So, frankly, I took it as a sort of challenge: There *must* be other explanations, other possibilities!"

HIS solution is, in his terms, an "unabashedly reductionistic" theory that nonetheless emphasizes the role of the environment in shaping desire. Genes and other biological factors don't lead directly to sexual orientation, he suggests. There is no gay gene—and no straight gene, for that matter. Instead, children's genetic structures predispose them to a variety of personality traits: enjoyment of rough-and-tumble play, say, or the desire to sit quietly and talk. And though these genes aren't directly linked to sexual orientation, they often match up with gender stereotypes: Kids who are more active and aggressive, for example, tend to be boys.

What happens next, he posits, is a chain of environmental events that transforms childhood fears and aversions into sexual desire. In part because their personalities "match up" with their physical sex, the majority of children identify strongly with their own gender—and find the opposite sex strange and disturbing. (Or, to use the technical term, yucky.) These future heterosexuals experience a multitude of physical sensations in response to their emotions about the opposite sex: hatred, fear, confusion, self-consciousness. Then, at the cusp of adolescence, Bem suggests, those electrical jostles transform—*kaboom!*—into erotic arousal at the sight of the other sex.



But a minority of kids, Bem continues, have the opposite experience: They find their own sex exotic and fascinatingly strange. Most commonly, he suggests, this happens because they are in some way "gender nonconforming"—a boy who enjoys tea parties more than hockey games, or a girl who prefers carrying a switchblade to toting a hairbrush. Feeling alienated, ostracized, or just plain different from their own gender, these kids get their attractions triggered through the same ineluctable process as their gender-conforming peers, except that their turn-ons end up being homoerotic. In short,

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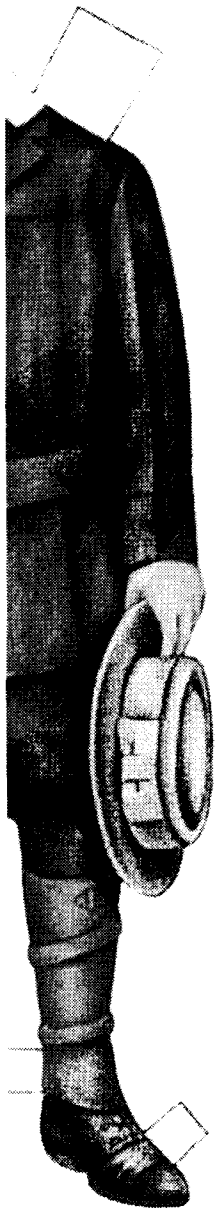
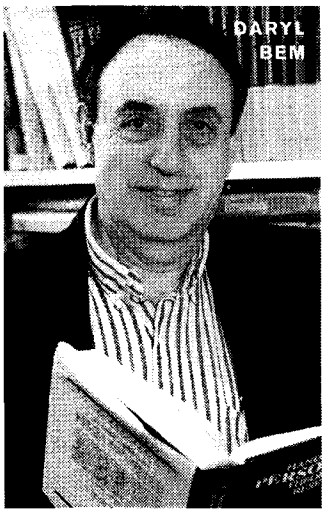
sexual desire is directed at those who made you most uncomfortable at an early age.

Bem made his case in a lively, accessible 1996 article in *Psychological Review*. (He plans to expand the paper into a book.) The EBE article cleverly threaded together a hodgepodge of sources, ranging from cross-cultural comparisons to lab tests. His strongest evidence, however, came from a study done in the late 1970s by the Kinsey Institute for Sex Research. Investigators performed in-depth interviews with approximately one thousand homosexuals and five hundred heterosexuals in San Francisco, prodding them about their relationships with their parents and their childhood memories. The data debunked most stereotypes: Gay men and lesbians were no more likely to have had a "smothering, seductive mother" or a "withdrawn, rejecting father" (à la Freud) than heterosexuals; they hadn't been "recruited" via molestation; nor were they "turned" gay merely because their peers suggested they were.



One statistic, however, stuck out: Both gay men and lesbians were far more likely than their straight counterparts to have felt "different" from others of their own gender and were more likely to have gender-nonconforming traits.

In fact, childhood gender nonconformity was, says Bem, "not only the strongest but the only significant childhood predictor" of adult homosexuality. Strikingly, 63 percent of both gay men and lesbians reported that they had "not enjoyed sex-typical activities," whereas only 10 percent of straight men and 15 percent of straight women said the same. And 72 percent of both gay men and lesbians recalled having felt different from same-sex children, most frequently because of non-stereotypical sex traits, such as not liking sports for boys or seeming aggressive for girls. (While 39 percent of straight men and a hefty 67 percent of straight women also reported feeling "different," the reasons they cited, argues Bem, were not connected with gender expectations—straight women, for example, most frequently cited feeling different because they didn't live up to beauty standards, not because they felt more masculine.)



The San Francisco findings matched up, writes Bem, with a plethora of other data. A 1995 meta-analysis of forty-eight separate studies (performed by Northwestern psychology researcher Michael Bailey and clinical psychologist Ken Zucker) confirmed that gay men and lesbians were more likely than their straight counterparts to recall gender-nonconforming traits. Such findings are buttressed by UCLA psychologist Richard Green's famed "sissy boy" study: Out of sixty-six gender-nonconforming boys and fifty-six gender-conforming boys, 75 percent of the nonconformers turned out to be gay or bisexual, compared with only 4 percent of the conventionally gendered tykes. (No such studies have been performed on girls.)

Of course, this evidence merely suggests that gender nonconformity and homosexuality are linked—not that one precedes the other. The type of statistical trick used to distinguish such chronological alternatives is called a "path analysis," a dizzyingly complex mathematical stringing apart of the two sequences. In as-yet-unpublished analyses, Bem performed such wizardry on a data set documenting sexual orientation and gender nonconformity in Australian male twins. Bem's numbers supported the EBE hypothesis—that is, gender nonconformity seemed to *precede* sexual orientation. (The conclusion, he admits, is tentative.)

The biggest mystery in the Exotic Becomes Erotic sequence is the central process itself: Why would finding one gender or another exotic trigger a turn-on? Bem's not sure—but he theorizes that a combination of documented biological phenomena could account for sexual choices in adulthood *without* recourse to a gay gene. For example, the "extrinsic arousal" effect derives from evidence that individuals who get physiologically revved up by any means—from running in place to watching a gory film—are subsequently more likely to become sexually stimulated. Could peer harassment somehow spark erotic arousal? In the equally well-known "opponent process," the nervous system compensates for strong negative sensations by producing strong positive jolts: Parachutists, for instance, initially experience intense physical expressions of terror (racing hearts, stiff bodies). But after several jumps, Bem notes, "the fear extinguishes and...[they] regularly experience a strong euphoric 'high' after each jump." Similarly, Bem muses, a taunted effeminate boy might transform fear and anxiety into pleasurable homoerotic sensations.

These two effects, Bem writes, might also combine with an "imprinting" process to create a lasting sexual predilection. Just as baby ducks will follow the first large moving object they encounter—whether it be a duck or a scientist—many animals undergo an imprinting process in mate selection. In one study, notes Bem, male zebra finches reared in nests of Bengalese finches developed a long-term lust for these out-of-town chicks, preferring them even when presented with females of their own species. "There are several specific features of sexual imprinting in birds that appear to be analogous to the development of sexual orientation in humans," Bem writes. "First, sexual imprinting establishes an attraction to an entire class of individuals well before sexual maturity. Second, after imprinting has been established, the sexual preference is quite stable, even irreversible."

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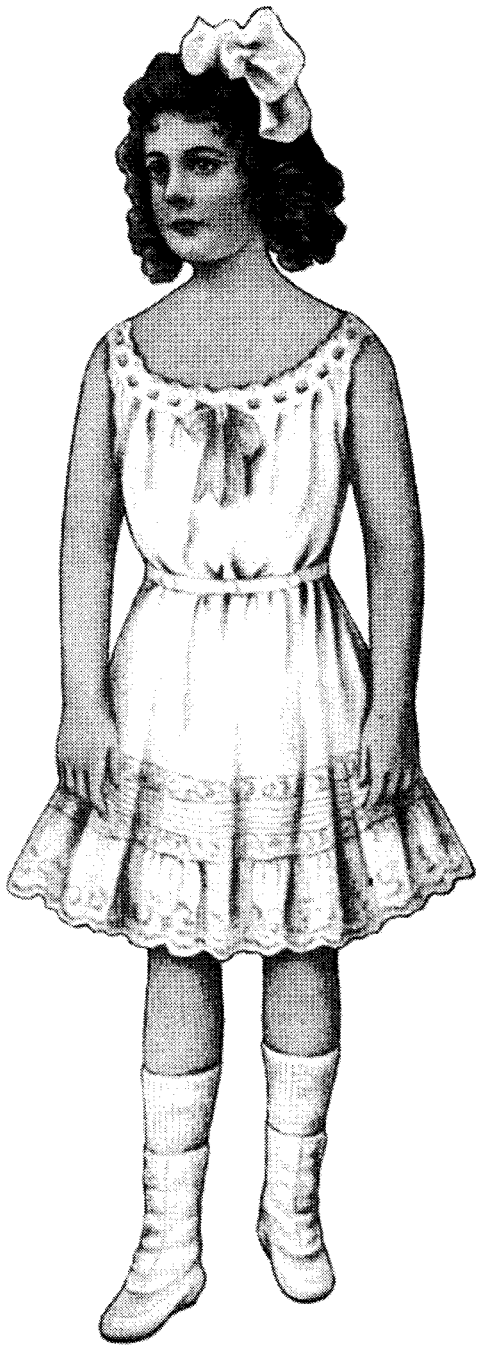
BEM'S SNAZZILY TITLED THEORY ATTEMPTS TO RECLAIM THE DISCUSSION SURROUNDING THE ORIGINS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION FROM RAMPAGING GENETICISTS.

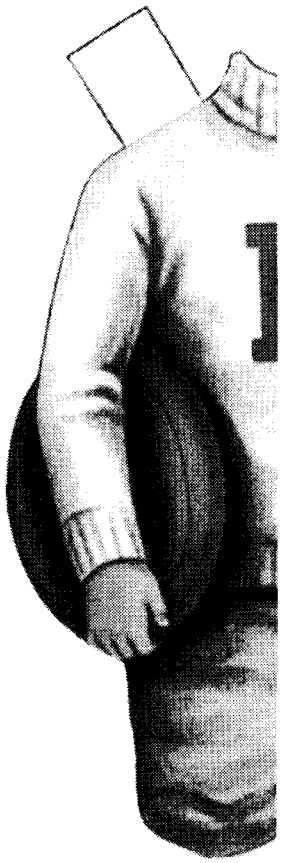


For many, no doubt, this move from zebra finches to humans is a mighty big leap. But Bem's not bothered. In addition to finding his theory "politically, scientifically, and aesthetically satisfying," he writes, "I believe that it can also be sustained by the evidence."

NOT surprisingly, Bem believes that his own childhood matches his theory rather well. Born in Colorado in 1938, he recalls being an unathletic and academically focused boy. "A lot of my pals were girls, and I preferred quiet play," he says. "Often I had boy pals, but they were usually deviant in terms of not liking sports." (Fortunately, he notes, "my father wasn't especially masculine, and my mother always prided herself on being nonconforming.") Bem attended Reed College in Oregon, where he had casual homosexual involvements; even so, he says, "somehow that never interfered with my view that I would get married, have children, live monogamously, all of that."

Bem received his degree in physics, and began pursuing graduate work in the subject at MIT. But he switched gears after taking an eye-opening course on the psychology of race relations, a subject he also explored politically through his civil rights activism in CORE. Upon becoming a social psychologist, he studied everything from personality theory to theories of self-perception. ("I've always been a bit of an intellectual dilettante," he says.) He received an appointment at Cornell in 1978. Since then, he has continued to range widely in his research. In 1994 he wrote a controversial but well-regarded paper for *Psychological Bulletin* on psychic phenomena, bringing a new test for telepathy to the attention of skeptical scientists—an interest that grew out of his hobby as an amateur magician.

On their first date, Bem says, he told his future wife, Sandra—now a women's studies professor at Cornell—that she should know two things about him: He was from Colorado, and he was primarily homoerotic. She responded that she had never met anyone from Colorado. "She was rebelling against her parents' ideas about sex—anything they said had to be wrong," he explains. The two formed a self-consciously egalitarian marriage at a time when 1970s feminist ideas were first being articulated, maintaining two careers and splitting household responsibilities. They also cheerfully offered up their unconventional marriage as a role model: Traveling from place to place, the Bems gave popular and theatrical first-person speeches on androgyny, marriage, and non-gendered parenting (even before the birth of their children, Jeremy and Emily) and were featured in an article in the premiere issue of *Ms.* magazine. A charming anecdote about their son, Jeremy, now appears in numerous psychology textbooks and articles: The little boy, raised with the idea that the only difference between men and women was their genitals, wore barrettes to school, only to have another boy insist that he must be a girl. Unable to convince him with words, Jeremy dropped his pants. "Everyone has a penis," responded the skeptic. "Only girls wear barrettes."



Daryl and Sandra Bem now live separately; each has had same-sex relationships since their separation in 1994. (Daryl's lover died of cancer; Sandra is no longer with her partner.) Even so, Bem says, "We didn't separate because of our sexual orientations." Instead, he cites personality differences and, ironically enough, conflicts over how to parent adolescents. (Another irony: Their children have pursued strikingly gender-typical paths, their daughter studying theater, their son pursuing mathematics.) Despite their separation, Bem claims, he and Sandra are "good friends.

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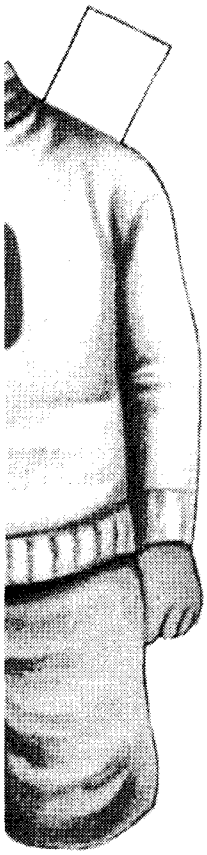
My guess is, as we age and get older and one of us becomes infirm, we'll take care of each other." In the fall, Sandra will publish *An Unconventional Family* (Yale), a memoir of the Bems' iconoclastic marriage and child rearing, in which she details the couples' bonding over their mutual gender nonconformity and their attempt at a defiantly "gender-liberated, anti-homophobic, sex-positive" upbringing for their kids. The memoir itself is a bit of a family project: It includes interviews with her children and an epilogue by Daryl.



IN BEM'S IDEAL WORLD, "GENTLEMEN MIGHT STILL PREFER BLONDS, BUT SOME OF THOSE GENTLEMEN MIGHT PREFER BLONDS OF ANY SEX."

HAS Bem's commitment to gender nonconformity allowed him to see through the cloudy pieties of the genetic revolution? Or is he blinded by his desire for a theory that leaves wiggle room for an androgynous, bisexual political agenda? There's no denying that Bem's peculiar insistence on combining a mechanistic theory—EBE has, at its heart, a system of causes and effects as implacable as any chromosome—with Whitmanesque fantasies of polymorphous perversity leaves him open to the criticism that he is a mere eccentric, performing a semantic bait and switch instead of sticking to the data. Is EBE just another of Bem's magic tricks?

The EBE theory is guaranteed to annoy two diametrically opposed camps: social constructionists, who believe that sexuality is shaped entirely by culture, and hard-core geneticists and biologists, who believe it is simply hard-wired into the body. (Dean Hamer, author of the famed gay-gene study, says he is intrigued by the fact that the theory contains a genetic component but remains "skeptical of the flexibility Bem suggests for human behavior.") But participants from Bem's own camp—social psychology—also have begun to peck at the newly hatched theory.

Most prominently, UCLA's Anne Peplau has written a detailed critique of the EBE theory which appeared in *Psychological Review* this April, along with a response from Bem. According to Peplau, Bem has merely updated Havelock Ellis's quaint turn-of-the-century notion of gender inversion—that is, gay men are attracted to men because they are "like" women, lesbians are attracted to women because they are "like" men. She finds Bem too eager to brush aside data that contradicts his thesis—in particular, the San Francisco study showing that half of straight women considered themselves tomboys in childhood. And she finds that Bem's ideas don't jibe with women's more fluid sexuality. While Peplau salutes his attempt to fight genetic determinism, she says, "Part of the problem is the way he defines sexual attraction. For women, what often happens is falling in love with a person, *then* becoming sexually attracted." Women's sexual feelings, she argues, are frequently driven by "limerance"—a romantic infatuation, falling in love with a specific individual—not by some objectifying lust for a physical type. What's more, sexual orientation, in her view, may not *have* any single mechanism that fits for both men and women: "I think the answer is going to wind up as multiple pathways. Just as there are many different routes to people becoming psychologists, there are many different routes that lead adult women to be lesbian inclined. Frankly, I don't think, at least for women, his route will be center stage."

Bem readily acknowledges the problems in the empirical data currently available. "I have no real investment in it all being *true*," he says with a grin. "I want to use the theory to raise these kinds of questions." (This tack drives Peplau crazy: "When you bring up an empirical problem, he simply shifts his interpretation once again!") As a result, Bem tends to embrace rather than deflect criticism. Doesn't the San Francisco study suffer from being a retrospective interview? After all, won't gay people be more likely to recall childhood nonconformity now that they've consciously stepped outside the mainstream? Yes, Bem replies calmly. Why would some lesbians be attracted to "masculine" women, or gay men to "feminine" men, if their erotically charged alienation was from the normative gender stereotypes? Why the central focus on the peer group—are people really so immune to the influences of their families? Why wouldn't the EBE dynamic work its magic on, say, a Jewish kid attending an all-WASP boarding school? "These are *all* good questions," Bem responds. "I'd like to know the answers."

Yet Bem is hardly willing to cave in to his critics. In his response to Peplau, he writes, "I especially dispute the implication that my theory is the androcentric fantasy of yet another male theorist who believes that the whole of romantic life resides in the *cojones*." For one thing, he argues, EBE suggests an explanation for the very phenomenon Peplau describes: the greater fluidity of women's sexual desire, including the higher proportion of women who perceive their sexual orientation as "chosen." Today's young girls, he points out, have a broader range of allowable behavior in terms of gender. "This implies that girls are less likely than boys to feel [different] from opposite-sex and same-sex peers and, hence, are less likely to develop exclusively heteroerotic or homoerotic orientations." In other words, a wide variety of women-only sexual phenomena—"political lesbianism," lesbian until graduation, women who claim they "became" lesbian in middle age, and the popular "I don't love women, I just love Ellen" syndrome—may actually be the result of feminism's efforts to expand girls' horizons.

In fact, notes Bem with some excitement, this is the most radical implication of his theory: that heterosexuality is not,

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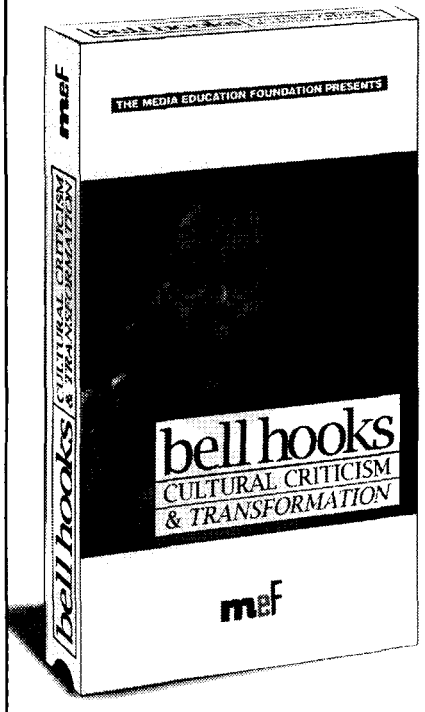
in fact, a "natural" or default sexual orientation, merely the most *likely* outcome in a gender-divided culture. (A societal setup, he acknowledges, that is nearly universal.) "Freud said it first: You have to solve the problem of heterosexuality as much as you have to solve the problem of homosexuality," he says. But wait. Surely heterosexuality is dictated by evolution. Does Bem doubt Darwin? "Heterosexual behavior is reproductively advantageous, but it does not follow that it must therefore be sustained through genetic transmission," he writes. "EBE theory implies that heterosexuality is the modal outcome across time and culture because virtually every human society ensures that most boys and girls will grow up seeing the other sex as exotic and, hence, erotic.... As long as the environment supports or promotes a reproductively successful behavior sufficiently often, it will not necessarily get programmed into the genes."

What would happen if we transformed this environment—with neither sex feeling alienated from the other, most children sharing friendships with both genders, and few traits regarded as exclusively "masculine" or "feminine"? In that case, Bem writes, "I believe that many of today's nonheterosexual women may be giving us a preview of what sexual orientations might look like in a less gender-polarized future." Waxing utopian, he envisions a world in which men and women base their erotic choices "on a more diverse and idiosyncratic variety of attributes" than just biological sex. Or, more piquantly: "Gentlemen might still prefer blonds, but some of those gentlemen (and some ladies) might prefer blonds of any sex."

THE plaudits and brickbats for Bem's theory have not always come from predictable corners. In contrast to social psychologists like Peplau, evolutionary biologist Jim Weinrich welcomes EBE as revolutionary. In fact, Weinrich says, he and Bem came up with different versions of the idea nearly simultaneously. Although Weinrich's approach varies slightly from Bem's, he shares a belief in the central EBE dynamic. But where's the proof? Weinrich isn't troubled. For him, the theoretical leap is the achievement; as with all major scientific insights, the details will get filled in later. "Einstein didn't first say, 'I need to work out the implications of Michelson and Morley,'" he explains. "It was, 'I do these weird thought experiments.' It was a theoretical tour de force, almost independent of actual experimental evidence of the speed of light. The role of the theorist is to say, 'Hey, look, if this were true, look at all the wonderful things this explains!' Do the consequences have to be thought out and tested? Well, yes. But if it sounds compelling, we'd better test it out."

In fact, Bem hopes to see his theory rigorously tested with fresh studies and statistical analyses. Some of these would focus on proving or disproving the basic "exotic to erotic" process: Do children respond with physical tingles to the presence of the gender they feel different from? And how, if at all, do these sensations code themselves as sexual arousal? But the more difficult process would seem to be the chronological path analysis. Will crunching the numbers ever enable us to tell for sure whether genes lead directly



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to *both* homosexuality and gender nonconformity or whether the path winds—as Bem suggests—from genes to personality to gender nonconformity to sexual orientation?

Maybe, maybe not, says Michael Bailey, an expert on path analyses. These highly technical statistical methods, Bailey points out, can be performed in a number of different ways, and it will take time to figure out whether it's even possible to distinguish clearly between the two paths. For his part, Bailey so far prefers recent hypotheses that suggest a prenatal hormonal "masculinization" or "feminization" of the brain, hypotheses borne out by the finding on lesbian "ear clicking." He finds such theories more "parsimonious"—a scientific term for the neatest explanation.

Meanwhile, Bailey is polishing off his next huge data set, from an Australian study on five thousand twins. The early results, he says, show some degree of heritability for *both* gender nonconformity and sexual orientation, although the level for sexual orientation appears to be lower than in other studies. Such findings leave EBE's fate very much up in the air—but Bailey isn't holding his breath. "I think that Bem's is a provocative and surprising theory," says Bailey. "And like most provocative and surprising theories, I bet that it's not true."

Similar skepticism comes from clinical psychologist Ken Zucker, Bailey's coauthor for the meta-analysis Bem cites. He says he "likes the theory," which gibes with some of his clinical observations of kids with Gender Identity Disorder (a controversial diagnosis for children who desperately wish to change sex). He is dismissive, however, of the more utopian conclusions that Bem draws. "I think Daryl Bem and his former wife, Sandra, fall in the long tradition of American romantics. I think it's because they both have been in Ithaca for too long and they should get out!" he says dryly. "Bem's constructing a romantic, pro-gay idea that, if society were less gender polarized, what people find exotic might be eye color or length of earlobes. It's a good romantic fantasy, but I'm not persuaded. I just think they're naive."

Bem himself, meanwhile, seems anything but naive about the debate he's triggered. His aim: to move the discussion forward by waving the academic equivalent of a bullfighter's red cape. "There's a way of stating the theory that's very strong, very dogmatic—and ultimately indefensible," he says, gesturing with one hand. "And there's a weaker version of the theory, which is reasonable, it's plausible, it rests on the data—but it's not very interesting without the stronger version." Bem compares his intellectual tactics to his experience in the civil rights movement, when the more rabble-rousing language of CORE scared the Ann Arbor city council into negotiating with the NAACP. "Stating the argument dogmatically makes clear the assumptions that other people have been making that are invisible," he says calmly. "So far we don't have the data to distinguish between their theory and mine, but now there's a clearly stated alternative that they must push against. It's consciousness raising, in the intellectual sense."

Emily Nussbaum is a contributing editor of *Lingua Franca*. Her article, "Good Grief: The Case for Repression," appeared in the October 1997 issue.

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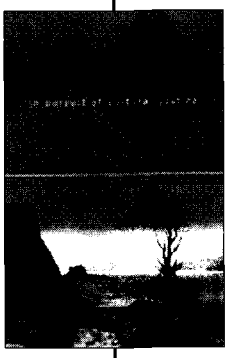

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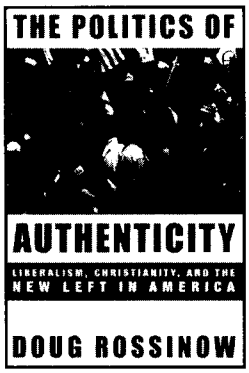

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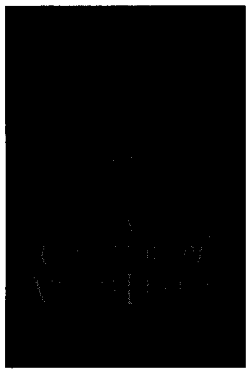

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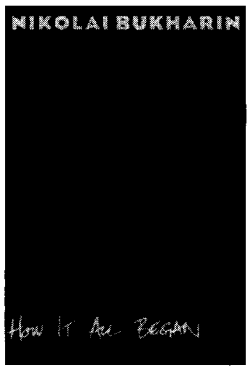

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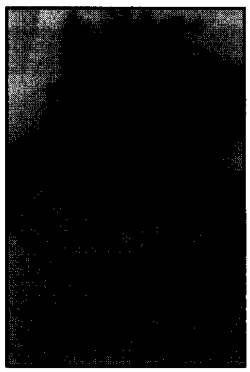

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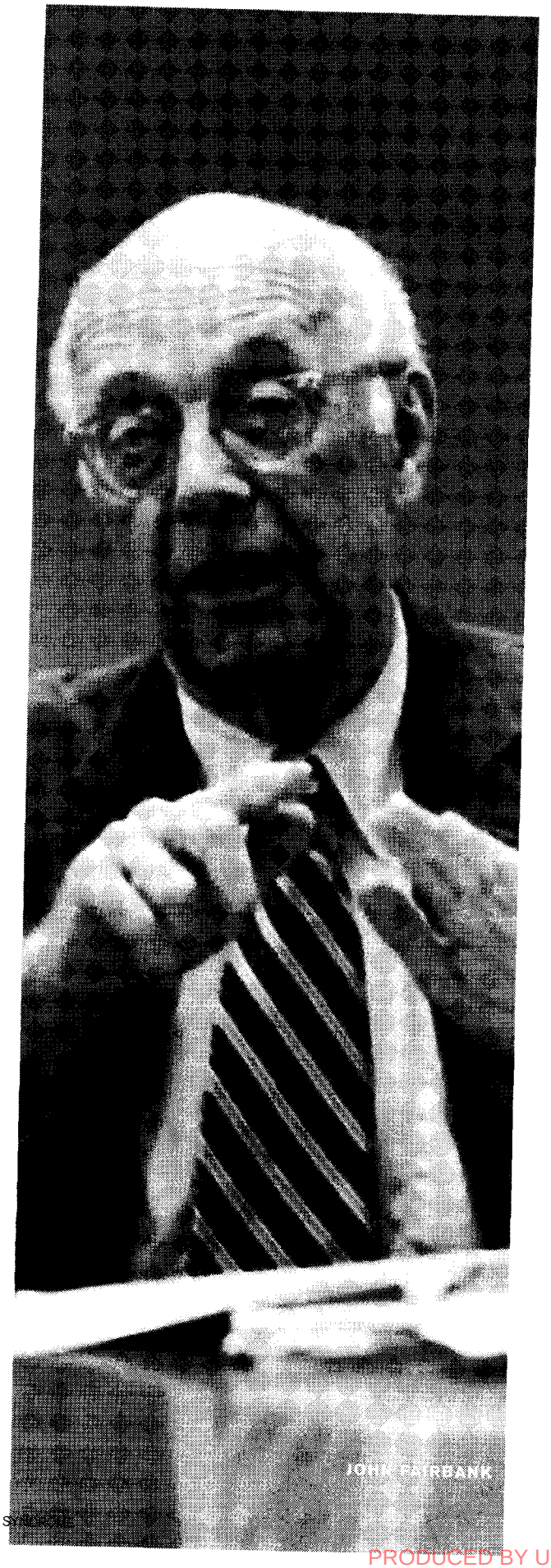

JOHN FAIRBANK

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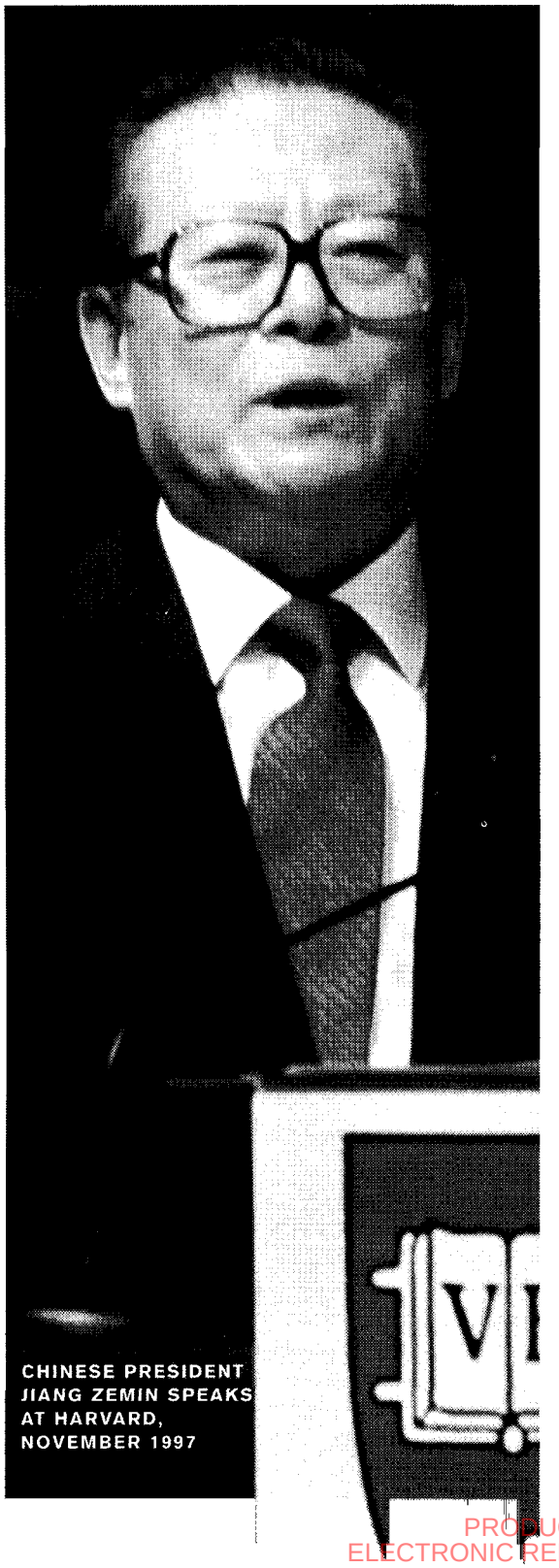
THE CHINA SYNDROME

FOR YEARS, AMERICAN SINOLOGISTS HAVE TREATED THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT WITH KID GLOVES. ARE THEY STILL PULLING THEIR PUNCHES?



CHINESE PRESIDENT JIANG ZEMIN SPEAKS AT HARVARD, NOVEMBER 1997

Last November, near the end of a weeklong visit to the United States, Chinese president Jiang Zemin delivered an address at Harvard University. Jiang's visit to the school was controversial. He had been invited to speak by Ezra Vogel, one of the university's senior China specialists. At Vogel's urging, the Chinese leader had agreed to take some questions from the audience following his talk, but only on one troubling condition: The questions had to be submitted in writing ahead of time and screened by a faculty committee. Vogel's decision to sign off on the arrangement inflamed passions on a campus that has long been a hotbed of opposition to China's human rights policies.

The criticism aimed at Vogel by other members of the Harvard community, however, was tame compared to the flak he took from fellow sinologists. "It was a real disgrace," says Edward Friedman, a professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin. For the privilege of basking in Harvard's prestige, Friedman argues, Jiang should have been obliged to field questions from the floor—like any other speaker. Longtime China watcher Orville Schell agrees. "We are Americans," says Schell, dean of the University of California's Graduate School of Journalism. "We believe in free exchange. It is unseemly when we trim our jib to get the Chinese to play ball."

BY **MICHAEL STEINBERGER**

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Just how far will some scholars go to placate Beijing? In one of the more controversial passages of their recent book, *The Coming Conflict With China* (Knopf, 1997), Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro claim that several leading sinologists, whom they decline to name, avoid discussing sensitive subjects, such as human rights and Tibet, because they don't wish to anger Beijing and endanger their access to China. With two prominent scholars, Columbia's Andrew Nathan and Princeton's Perry Link, currently barred from entering China because they have run afoul of the mainland regime over these very issues, Bernstein and Munro (respectively the former Beijing and Hong Kong bureau chiefs for *Time*) accuse unnamed academics of having opted to keep their misgivings to themselves.

Though most sinologists believe that Bernstein and Munro are hitting below the belt, their allegations, coupled with the rift over Jiang's Harvard visit, raise some troubling questions. For American academics, access to China is at an all-time high, but has that access come at too steep a price? Are intellectual integrity and professional solidarity being sacrificed in the rush to take advantage of new research opportunities?

For the scholarly community, these questions are closely linked to American sinology's error-plagued history and to the broader debate over how best to deal with China today. It has long been an article of faith that more contact with the outside world would nudge China further down the road to democracy. It yet may, but like other apostles of "constructive engagement," scholars have found the way paved with moral dilemmas. True, life for most Chinese has improved dramatically in the two decades since Beijing ditched Marxist economics and began to embrace the free market, but now China stands at a crossroads. Capitalism has arrived; democracy has not. Political dissent is still not tolerated. Over the past decade, the Chinese regime has deported or jailed nearly all of its most prominent critics. Thousands of prisoners languish in Chinese labor camps. Christians, Muslims, and Tibetans continue to feel the sting of oppression. Meanwhile, much to the chagrin of the United States and China's neighbors, Beijing is stirring up nationalist sentiment at home and appears determined to convert its economic prowess into geopolitical might.

In short, even the staunchest advocates of engagement find their faith sorely tested on a regular basis. While many sinologists believe it is necessary to stay the course, others think it is time China paid a price for its political intransigence.

THE BELIEF that American sinology has romanticized China and coddled its Communist rulers has haunted the field from its inception. Nothing better encapsulates the ambiguous relationship between sinologists and their subject than the quixotic career of the field's founding father, Harvard's John King Fairbank. For most of his life, Fairbank was convinced that Communism was good for China. His views on the matter were partly informed by his travels there in the early 1930s. Having seen life under Chiang Kai-shek's brutal Kuomintang regime, he felt that almost any change would be for the better. Nevertheless, given the country's extraordinary predicament—its teeming population, the constant threat of anarchy—he seemed to regard Western-style democracy as a luxury China could ill afford. Though Fairbank recognized that Chinese Communism, even with its peculiar characteristics, was a totalitarian system, he was convinced that revolution was a necessary step for China.

EZRA VOGEL

In the 1940s, Fairbank, like many of his colleagues, fell under the sway of what Yale historian Jonathan Spence calls the "Yan'an Mystique." Yan'an is the town in Shaanxi Province that served as Mao Zedong's base from 1936 to 1947. The movement it became home to was immortalized by the American journalist Edgar Snow in his book *Red Star Over China* (1938), which portrayed Mao and his followers as dedicated warriors spearheading a revolution that was both inevitable and desirable.

Snow's firsthand account made a powerful impact, not least on America's China watchers, most of whom welcomed the Communist takeover when it came in 1949. With China off limits to American academics after that (it would remain this way for nearly thirty years), this favorable view of Mao and his movement gelled into what Fairbank himself once described as a kind of "sentimental Sinophilia," the tendency among sinologists to see only the best in China—even, or especially, when they couldn't see the country at all. The McCarthy hearings also colored attitudes: Even those scholars with reservations about the revolution were reluctant to voice their doubts because they did not want to throw red meat to the American right. These various impulses led Fairbank and his colleagues to commit the first of what would form a pattern of serious blunders on China: They discounted reports of the widespread famine that swept the country during the early 1960s.

How did it happen? When news of mass starvation first began emerging from China in the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward—Mao's bungled attempt at forced collectivization—Beijing blamed the food shortages on droughts. The famine was, of course, a man-made disaster, but it would be years before the West knew the full scope of the tragedy. It is now believed that more than thirty million Chinese peasants died as a result of Mao's agricultural schemes. That it took nearly four decades for scholars to come up with this figure—the most authoritative account of the famine, British journalist Jasper Becker's book *Hungry Ghosts* (Free Press), was published only two years ago—is one indication of just how isolated China was from the rest of the world in the 1960s.

Even so, there were plenty of press reports at the time. There were also thousands of Chinese refugees in Hong Kong, with horrible tales to tell. Yet these accounts of famine were all but ignored by mainstream sinologists. Lucian Pye, a professor emeritus of political science at MIT and a close friend of Fairbank's, was among the scholars who interviewed new arrivals in Hong Kong. He says most China specialists simply assumed that the refugees were malcontents or had been coached by Taiwanese officials eager to smear the Communists. Over time, refugees learned to

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tone down their stories if they wanted to be taken seriously. "It was just a real intellectual failure on our part," says Pye.

In contrast to the famine, the Cultural Revolution, whose most violent phase consumed China for several years in the late 1960s, was concentrated in the cities and was thus much harder to conceal from the outside world. Here, too, Hong Kong served as a window onto the cataclysm. Once again, hordes of refugees descended on the British colony. Scores of bodies washed onto its beaches. During the summer of 1967, Communist-led riots turned Hong Kong itself into a battle zone. In sum, the evidence of disaster was overwhelming. "By 1968 there was no excuse for not knowing what was going on," says Harvard's Roderick MacFarquhar, a leading scholar of the Cultural Revolution.

But the Cultural Revolution took place at a time when many American intellectuals were in the throes of their own social revolt—sparked by outrage at the Vietnam War and disillusionment with the capitalist system. From afar, the rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution, especially its stated desire to stamp out a sclerotic bureaucracy and put power back in the hands of the people, had much appeal. It struck a particular chord with a group of young academics and graduate students who banded together in 1968 to form the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars (CCAS). Several of its members would go on to enjoy considerable prominence in the China field, including Orville Schell, Edward Friedman, Ross Terrill, Perry Link, Andrew Nathan, and Jonathan Mirsky (all of whom are now among the fiercest critics of the Chinese government).

Many believed that Maoism was creating a radically egalitarian society in which the individual—or New Socialist Man—happily subsumed his interests to the greater social good. In fact, as they saw it, Mao's China had transcended the crass materialism of the West because it had literally transformed human nature itself. Besides extolling the virtues of the Cultural Revolution, members of the CCAS, like Mao's Red Guards, took aim at their teachers. In their view, the previous generation of sinologists had been insufficiently enthusiastic about Communism. In print and in person, Fairbank, Vogel, and other senior scholars were denounced by CCAS radicals as apologists for American imperialism in Asia, and were even accused of constructing the intellectual edifice on which Washington had based its unflagging animosity toward mainland China since 1949.

Then, in 1971 and 1972, two groups of CCAS members toured China. Most returned home disabused of their fantasies. But American sinophilia found other homes: Just as these young radicals began to lose their passion for Mao, America's foreign policy elite was paying court to him. And in May 1972, following Richard Nixon's pathbreaking visit to Beijing, Fairbank himself traveled to China for the first time since 1949. "The Maoist revolution is on the whole the best thing that has happened to the Chinese people in many centuries," he wrote enthusiastically upon his return. "At least, most Chinese seem now to believe so, and it will be hard to prove otherwise.... The stress and even violence of 1966–69 have now been succeeded...by a sense of relaxation and euphoria that makes 1972 a happy time to be in China."

Fairbank's diagnosis could not have been further from the truth. The Cultural Revolution had already claimed more than a million lives and destroyed countless others. The blanket of terror did not lift until after Mao's death in 1976. When it did, the Chinese people let loose with a torrent of bitter recollections. Writers led the way; the so-called scar literature of the late 1970s had a powerful impact on

"IT WAS A REAL DISGRACE," SAYS EDWARD FRIEDMAN OF JIANG'S HARVARD VISIT. "IT IS UNSEEMLY WHEN WE TRIM OUR JIB TO GET THE CHINESE TO PLAY BALL," AGREES ORVILLE SCHELL.

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Western opinion. So, too, did the book *Chinese Shadows,* by Belgian sinologist Pierre Ryckmans. Using the nom de plume Simon Leys, Ryckmans wrote a scathing exposé of the "Maoist cancer...gnawing away at the face of China...cretinizing the most intelligent people on earth." With the release of *Chinese Shadows* in 1977, many intellectuals quickly moved to renounce their earlier affinity for Mao.

Before long, the entire sinological field fell into a period of soul searching and self-criticism. Boston University's Merle Goldman was never seduced by Mao. Yet, in 1981, she felt moved to confess that "my colleagues in the China field and I did not speak out loudly and publicly about the persecution of the intellectuals in China's Cultural Revolution...Not enough of us...focused on what was happening to intellectuals under Mao, nor were we forceful enough in bringing their plight to the attention of others." However, even as sinologists began to view the Communist regime with more skepticism, they suddenly found themselves welcome in China.

In 1978, as part of the agreement normalizing relations between the United States and China, Deng Xiaoping, who by then had firmly established himself as Mao's successor, agreed to let American academics resume fieldwork on the mainland. For two generations of sinologists, it was the end of a bitter exile. "Until that point, I had resolved that my whole life would be spent like [the classicist] Werner Jaeger, studying a dead society I would never see," says Frederic Wakeman, a professor of history at the University of California at Berkeley.

But if American scholars were to visit China, it quickly became clear that they would have to play by the rules. As soon as the gates swung open, they very nearly closed again. One of the first American graduate students to arrive in China was Steven Mosher, who was then pursuing a doctorate in anthropology at Stanford University. Fluent in both Mandarin and Cantonese, Mosher was permitted to spend nine months between 1979 and 1980 in Guangdong Province near Hong Kong. Having gone there to study an agricultural commune, Mosher's research took him in an unexpected and politically explosive direction.

What he documented, in fact, was the brutal manner in which local Communist Party officials carried out Beijing's one-child policy. According to Mosher, doctors and villagers, desperate to draw attention to human rights violations, invited him to observe a number of forced sterilizations and abortions, some of them performed in the third trimester. At the time, information about China's population control policy was extremely difficult for scholars to come by. After leaving Guangdong, Mosher traveled to Taiwan, where he wrote a series of articles describing what he had seen. Published in a local newspaper, the articles were accompanied by gruesome photos that Mosher himself had taken.

Once Mosher went public with his findings, Beijing reacted swiftly and furiously. Mosher was accused of stealing state secrets, bribing officials, smuggling gold out of China, and driving his van into parts of the countryside that were off limits to foreigners—charges that Mosher says were "made up out of whole cloth." The Chinese allegedly warned Stanford that if Mosher wasn't punished, all scholarly exchanges between the United States and China would end.

Here, the story gets murky. By several accounts, Mosher was indeed a loose cannon during his stay in China—"a real Indiana Jones type," says one scholar familiar with the case. In 1983, he was expelled from Stanford for violations of professional ethics—specifically for using

ACCORDING TO HARVARD'S JOHN FAIRBANK, AMERICAN ACADEMICS FELL PREY TO A KIND OF "SENTIMENTAL SINOPHILIA" ABOUT MAO AND HIS MOVEMENT.

MAO'S SOLDIERS IN YAN'AN

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photographs that included the faces of villagers, thus putting them in potential danger. The university found that he had engaged in "illegal and seriously unethical conduct" that "endangered his research subjects." Mosher denies the charge.

In fact, many scholars believe that pressure from Beijing, as well as from the U.S. government committee that handles scholarly exchanges with China, did indeed play a part in Stanford's decision. Mosher, who is now president of the Virginia-based Population Research Institute, thinks Beijing's grievance about him was the decisive factor: "You kill one to warn a hundred. I was made an example of." But what he resents most is the willingness of other sinologists to see him purged for the sake of preserving their own access: "There was a hysterical reaction by some in the academic community. Instead of thoughtfully considering the situation and coming down on the side of academic freedom, they hastily decided that nothing should be allowed to stand in the way of their research in China."

ALTHOUGH IN the end the Chinese government allowed the exchange program to continue, the Mosher case had a chilling impact. For several years thereafter, Americans doing fieldwork in China found their movements and activities severely curtailed. During the 1980s, however, as the economic reforms set in motion by Deng took hold, a period of unprecedented openness for scholars and students from both countries ensued. After languishing for three decades in a state of arrested development, Chinese intellectual life was once again blossoming, and American sinologists were among its biggest beneficiaries.

For the most part, these scholars assumed that the totalitarian dictatorship of the Mao era had given way to a "modernizing authoritarian regime" along the lines of South Korea and Taiwan. But while this model had obvious theoretical appeal, the Tiananmen Square massacre in the spring of 1989 made it appear untenable. The gradualists never imagined that China would spawn a massive, pro-democracy uprising, nor that it would so brutally suppress one.

Once again, the sinological community had badly misjudged the situation in China—and this time it didn't have the option of pleading ignorance by reason of absence. Writing in *Newsweek* soon after the massacre, Michel Oksenberg, then a professor at the University of Michigan, confessed that

> no China specialist—in or out of the government—foresaw the massive setback that occurred.... We underestimated the willingness of the students to defend the slogans, symbols and styles they adopted from East Asia and the West. We also sold short the resolve of the octogenarian leaders to defend their life's work.... Clearly, China has changed far less in the past ten years than the joint ventures and the skyscrapers in Beijing suggest.

ORVILLE SCHELL

ANDREW NATHAN

DESPITE the pall cast on U.S.-China relations by the Tiananmen Square massacre, the Chinese continued to host foreign researchers, and over the past decade access has steadily improved. Indeed, most academics say it has never been better. Yet some scholars' books are still banned in China, and several who have irritated Beijing have paid the ultimate price: They have been barred from entering the country. Ross Terrill, an Australian-born, Harvard-trained sinologist who has authored several influential books about China, has been unable to obtain a work visa since 1993; he has never been given a reason for the ban but assumes his activities on behalf of various dissidents led to his punishment. Columbia's Andrew Nathan, who specializes in Chinese politics, has been persona non grata since 1995, when Beijing refused to grant him a visa to take part in a trip sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations. (In protest, the delegation, which included several other scholars, delayed the trip, then, with Nathan's blessing, eventually went ahead.) Though long active on human rights issues, Nathan believes his real crime was to have written the preface to the salacious tell-all memoirs of Mao's doctor, Li Zhisui, a contribution that was noted, and harshly denounced, by the Chinese state-run media. His most recent request for a visa—he had been invited to participate in a conference in Shanghai in February—was denied without explanation.

Perhaps no American scholar has infuriated the mainland regime more, however, than Princeton professor of Chinese language and literature Perry Link. In 1989, Link was living in Beijing, administering a scholarly exchange program. In February of that year, President George Bush, on a visit to the Chinese capital, hosted a dinner at the Great Wall Sheraton Hotel. Link and his wife were on the guest list and so was dissident Fang Lizhi and his wife. The two couples decided to travel to the hotel together but never made it there; at various points along the way, they were surrounded by Chinese police who had been ordered to keep the Fangs from attending the dinner. With Link's help, Fang Lizhi spent the rest of the evening giving interviews to Western journalists, and his account of the ordeal upstaged the dinner itself in international headlines, much to the embarrassment of the Chinese.

After Tiananmen Square, Link continued his work on behalf of dissidents, and Princeton eventually became home to several prominent critics of the Chinese regime. Link was able to visit China again in 1995, but when he tried to return the next year, he was detained at the Beijing airport and put on a flight back to the United States. Link was given no reason for his excommunication. He thinks it was a cumulative offense: his efforts for dissidents in Beijing, along with his work for Human Rights Watch and his hard-hitting commentaries on the Voice of America's Chinese-language service. (Among American sinologists, Link is regarded as the most accomplished Chinese speaker.)

Link says his inability to travel to China has been more of a personal blow than a professional one. But he does agree that, for a younger China specialist, being blacklisted by Beijing could be devastating. As

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"FOREIGN SCHOLARS WHO PLAY BY CHINA'S RULES CONTINUE TO MEET WITH VICE PREMIERS IN BEIJING'S GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE," WRITE BERNSTEIN AND MUNRO. "THOSE WHO DON'T, DON'T."

he puts it, "You just aren't very credible if you don't go to China." Nathan also believes there is a real risk that up-and-coming sinologists will steer clear of certain subjects in order to avoid trouble. "If I didn't have tenure and my career depended on fieldwork in China, I would worry about it," he says. "It has a potential chilling effect."

HOW far will some sinologists go to protect their access? The issue of self-censorship burst into the open last year with the publication of *The Coming Conflict With China*. According to Bernstein and Munro:

> There are half dozen or so senior scholars of China whose careers have flourished, in part because of their skills as analysts but also in part because they have been granted access at a high level in China.... It would be unfair to say that Beijing requires flattery in exchange for access.... But on certain subjects, like the reputation of Chairman Mao or the questions of human rights, China's military intimidation of Taiwan, and Chinese control over Tibet, it is best either to flatter or remain silent.... Those who play by China's rules continue to meet with vice premiers in Beijing's Great Hall of the People. Those who don't, don't.

American journalists aren't the only ones accusing China scholars of a little bit of quid pro quo on the issue of access. Allegations of self-censorship have also frayed relationships among some mainland-born scholars now teaching in the United States. Princeton's Yu Ying-shih, who emigrated from China in the early 1950s and is one of the more outspoken critics of the Chinese regime, claims that several younger mainland-born academics—all rising stars in the field—who were active in the 1989 democracy movement have adjusted their views over the past decade in order to curry favor with Beijing. Yu sees it as a convenient change of heart: With new opportunities to teach in China, or even to serve as consultants to the government, these scholars have decided that "cooperating with Beijing is good for their careers." Like Bernstein and Munro, Yu will not name names on the record.

But in the view of many American sinologists, the whispering campaigns are out of line. These scholars see nothing sinister in the unwillingness of some prominent figures to be more outspoken about

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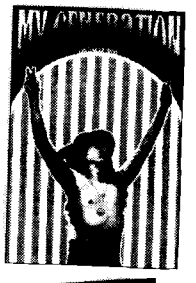

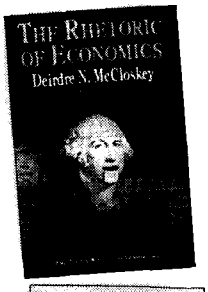

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human rights; it simply reflects a difference of opinion about how best to handle the issue. Furthermore, they argue, several well-known scholars move back and forth between academia and the policy-making world and thus need to choose their words with care. Vogel recently returned to Harvard after a stint on the National Intelligence Council. The University of Michigan's Kenneth Lieberthal has been a consultant to the State Department. (Access in Beijing often depends on how much clout a scholar is thought to wield in Washington.)

Lieberthal doesn't know if he is one of the scholars Bernstein and Munro had in mind but says that "if they were referring to me, they were wrong." He readily admits that the nature of his research—he studies decision making within the Chinese government—makes access crucial but denies that he avoids discussing hot-button issues because he worries about antagonizing Beijing. The fact that he devotes less time to human rights than scholars such as Link and Nathan simply reflects his conviction that human rights should not be the centerpiece of America's China policy. "I speak out about human rights," he says, "but I don't think the solution is to isolate China. My argument is that we can do an array of things to improve human rights there, such as helping facilitate the development of the legal system." Besides, Lieberthal doubts his access would be in jeopardy even if he did begin to speak out more forcefully about China's record on human rights. Today, he believes, it would require something truly extraordinary—along the lines of Link's case—to get the Chinese to clamp down on an American academic.

ARCHIVE PHOTOS

Yale's Wang Shaoguang has heard accusations of selling out before: Several years ago, the editors of a leading sinological journal rejected an article he submitted because they had been told that he was on Beijing's payroll, a charge he flatly denies. The misunderstanding was eventually cleared up and the piece was published. Wang sees the rumors about him and other scholars as emblematic of a growing intolerance among Chinese dissidents for those who do not support sweeping and immediate change. Although Wang was politically active in the late 1980s—then a doctoral candidate at Cornell, he helped organize protests by Chinese students across the United States—he has long advocated a gradual move toward democracy. Rather than address the substance of his argument, Wang says, critics prefer to impugn his motives.

Wang is not alone in feeling misunderstood by his compatriots. Huang Ya-

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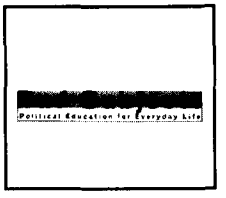

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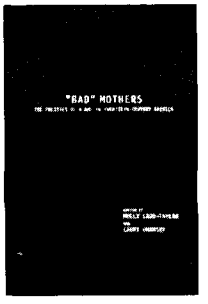

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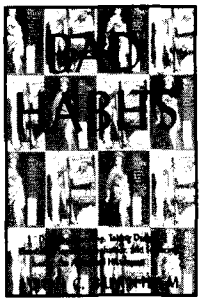

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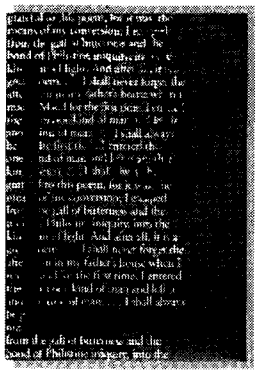

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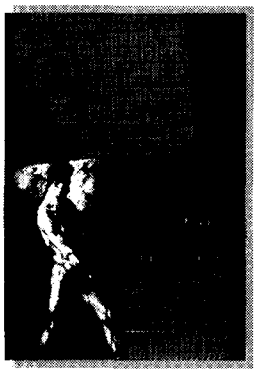

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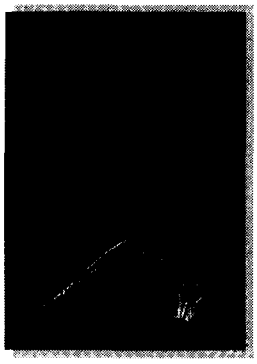

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sheng, a professor at the Harvard Business School, believes his views and those of other young mainland-born scholars have indeed evolved. Huang says that the tumult of 1989, coupled with the painful transition in post-Communist Eastern Europe, has convinced him and a number of his contemporaries that "working within the system is a better way to promote our values." He adds that the experience of living abroad, in a country that has suffered periodic bouts of sinophobia, has led some younger Chinese academics who were once harshly critical of Beijing to see their homeland in a more sympathetic light. "We realized that being Chinese was our identity," Huang says. "And we needed our identity."

But does the experience of cultural alienation in America encourage self-censorship on the more unattractive aspects of the homeland left behind? Perhaps, says Berkeley historian Yeh Yen-hsin. One of the first post-Mao wave of Chinese graduate students to come to the United States, Yeh, who currently chairs Berkeley's Center for Chinese Studies, sees a reluctance on the part of younger mainland-born scholars to touch the prickly subject of Chinese nationalism. Having examined the impact of Western imperialism on China, they have largely ignored the other side of the equation, Yeh argues. Younger scholars "use an established notion of Chinese identity to critique Western colonialism, without interrogating this whole notion of Chinese identity," she says. "They are not questioning these assumptions that are part of their intellectual baggage."

MEANWHILE, despite the restrictions that some outspoken critics face, China studies is a booming business. The central government, struggling to collect taxes from the outlying provinces, plainly has more important things to worry about than what American scholars are doing, and the gaping holes in the system afford researchers the kind of latitude that was once unimaginable. "Access is beyond the control of the people at the top," says Richard Madsen, a professor of sociology at the University of California at San Diego.

However, while many villages and archives are no longer off-limits, gaining entry to them poses another set of chal-

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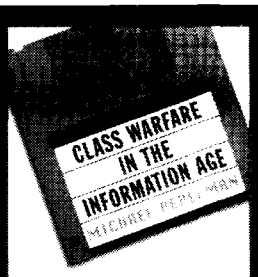

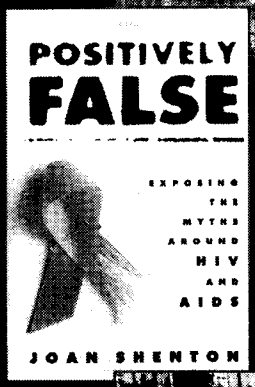

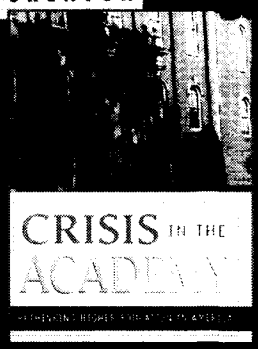

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ALTHOUGH SCHOLARS MAY NOW BYPASS THE BUREAUCRACY IN BEIJING, ACCESS STILL DEPENDS ON GUANXI (CONNECTIONS) AND GIFTS.

lenges. "For most of us, it's a matter of very subtle access," says Berkeley's Frederic Wakeman. Like many foreign investors, researchers have discovered that *guanxi*, or connections, is often the key to success in China. Although scholars and graduate students may now bypass the bureaucrats in Beijing, they frequently must go through a gauntlet of local power brokers in order to do their fieldwork. Years can be spent cultivating ties at the provincial and municipal levels. And though no one will admit to paying bribes, many scholars acknowledge that it's necessary to bring gifts when traveling to outlying villages. Those who go empty handed usually return empty handed.

In the introduction to his forthcoming book, *China's Catholics: Tragedy and Hope in an Emerging Civil Society* (California), Madsen discusses at length some of the issues he confronted while exploring Chinese Catholicism, one of the more sensitive aspects of Chinese life, in a city near Beijing. Given his subject matter and proximity to the Chinese capital, Madsen found himself on a shorter leash than most American scholars. Even so, he managed to move about with relative ease. On weekends, unaccompanied by his official minders, Madsen would attend mass at the local cathedral and interview priests and parishioners, collecting the kind of details that only refugees were able to provide before.

FROM THE proliferation of new research, a revised portrait of China's past is emerging—one that often challenges old assumptions. Undoubtedly, the most significant developments on the historical front concern the period from 1920 to 1949, when China moved from warlordism to war to revolution. The Nationalist regime of Chiang Kai-shek, once seen as wholly inadequate to the challenges facing China at the time, is now being reevaluated in a more favorable light, a process influenced in no small part by Taiwan's transition to democratic rule. By contrast, the idea that the Communist ascendancy was somehow inevitable, an article of faith among scholars since the Fairbank era, has been entirely discredited. Now most sinologists believe that the Communists were able to seize power primarily because the Japanese occupation left Chiang's government divided and demoralized.

Most dramatically, historians such as SUNY Binghamton's Mark Selden and Harvard's Stuart Schram have used their improved access to help puncture the Yan'an Mystique. With the surviving veterans now free to share their recollections with researchers, more than a dozen books about the Yan'an period have been published in recent years, and most paint a vastly harsher picture of Mao than the glowing account that Edgar Snow imparted to the world. Far from a tolerant haven dedicated to the revolutionary agenda, Yan'an was riven with factional strife. Manipulation, coercion, and violence were even then a way of life for Mao and his minions.

As more is learned about these disasters, there is a growing consensus among scholars that the first three decades of Communist rule were wasted years for China, a tragic detour on the road to modernization. As Jonathan Spence puts it, "We now view the revolution as more constricting than liberating." Certainly, the mainland regime can no longer claim any affection among American academics. From University of Wisconsin professor Maurice Meisner on the left to Steven Mosher on the right, sinologists of every stripe agree that the Communist Party has done China a lot more harm than good. The issue now is what comes next for China. To answer that question, says Berkeley's Yeh, scholars must first grapple with another one: Just how modern is China today?

Modern enough for democracy, or so many sinologists seem to think. In harmony with the current post–Cold War zeitgeist, the pendulum appears to have swung away from the cultural relativism that characterized the Fairbank era—a belief that China should be judged on its own terms—and toward a more Western-centered interpretation of China's development, what Andrew Nathan calls "evaluative universalism." Nathan and others believe that China is more than ready for democracy; they have little patience for the gradualist paradigm and feel that Washington should take a firmer line with Beijing over human rights and political reform.

Not everyone concurs, of course. Harvard's Huang agrees that the ultimate goal is to see a China that embraces the full complement of Western liberal concepts—"they are universal values, desirable values, and values that should prevail at the end of the day"—but points out that the West is "not an overnight phenomenon." In his view, it is unrealistic and unfair to expect more of China. He thinks American policy makers need to keep two questions in mind: Is China closing the gap with the West? And where does it stand compared to other developing nations? Huang contends that China is indeed closing the gap and is certainly evolving at a rate far faster than most Third World countries. For this, he thinks, Beijing should be applauded, not scolded.

But where China is going and who will ultimately lead it there are questions that most sinologists are not eager to entertain. In part, this reticence reflects the increased academic specialization within the field: Fewer and fewer scholars are focusing on the big picture or are qualified to address broader concerns. Then, too, there is the dizzying pace of change in China today. Even scholars who might otherwise be inclined to take a stab at punditry concede that, without the benefit of living in China or on its periphery, they are forever behind the curve. But, above all, there is a reluctance to make predictions about China's future because sinologists have been wrong about China so many times in the past. "Our batting average isn't particularly impressive," says Lucian Pye.

Michael Steinberger is a journalist previously based in Hong Kong and now living in New York City.

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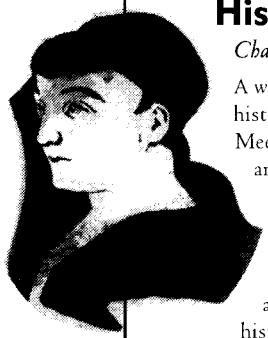

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RIGHT UP UNTIL THE DRAMATIC EVENTS of his mid-fifties, Emanuel Swedenborg—nicknamed "the Swedish Aristotle"—led the busy life of a one-man think tank. In 1716, while still in his twenties, he launched his country's first scientific journal. Expert knowledge of mineralogy and economics made him a valuable consultant to the Swedish government. His notebooks contained plans for devices to travel through the air and beneath the sea, and to discharge rounds of bullets at high speed. For public occasions, Swedenborg could turn a capable verse. And an astonishing number of scientific works flowed from his pen. Some of his theories—about the origin of the solar system, the functions of the ductless glands, and the significance of fossils, among other topics—were a century or so ahead of their time. By the 1740s, he was studying a particularly difficult problem: Where—and how—are the body and the soul connected? His findings anticipated later work on the physiology of the brain. Writing in the March 1997 issue of *The Neuroscientist,* Princeton psychologist Charles Gross notes that Swedenborg "was particularly prescient about the functions of the cerebral cortex, the corpus callosum, and the pituitary gland."

Had the prolific Swede never written another word, his place in the intellectual history of the eighteenth century would be remarkable enough. But not long after publishing the first volumes of his unfinished opus, ***Regnum animale*** ("The Animal Kingdom"), he underwent a fairly drastic career change. While dining at a hotel in London, Swedenborg noticed a figure in the corner of the room who, when engaged in conversation, proved to be an angel of the Lord—the first, it turned out, of many. The remaining years of Swedenborg's life were devoted to his new responsibilities as ethnologist and geographer of the invisible world.

There, he learned some remarkable things. Despite the divine visitations, Swedenborg's revelations were in tune with

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the Age of Enlightenment. Though his theology was unmistakably Christian, Swedenborg reported that God was unconcerned with the religious disputes people had been killing one another over for centuries. Unchurched Africans, he revealed, had an easier time adjusting to heaven than self-righteous Christians. After death, people gathered with kindred spirits—so the incorrigibly selfish made the afterlife a hell for one another. The spirits of the departed were neither asexual nor prudes; a single person could find romance in the afterlife. (This must have come as a great relief to the bachelor Swede, given how many sex dreams were recorded in his diary.)

Swedenborg's writings attracted the attention of a couple of theologians at the University of Uppsala, who became enthusiastic about his doctrine. But church authorities were alarmed by his rejection of the trinity, and most contemporary intellectuals were unimpressed. In 1766 an obscure *privatdoczent* by the name of Immanuel Kant published a short pamphlet, *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer,* lambasting the Swede. Seldom read today, the work is memorable for its display of scatological satire: "If a hypochondriac is troubled by gas in the stomach, it all depends on which direction it takes—if if goes downwards, then it comes out a F—, but if it rises upwards, it's an apparition or a holy inspiration."

Such criticism was of little real concern to Swedenborg himself. Exploration and writing kept him busy until 1772, when he entered the spiritual realm for good. In England, some of his readers founded the Church of the New Jerusalem; and by 1816, his doctrine had an organized presence in the New World. Today, there are 8,000 professed Swedenborgians in the United States and 40,000 elsewhere around the world.

NOW, the charms of Swedenborg's prose are by no means obvious—he is prolix and loves the semicolon beyond all reason—yet for two centuries his visions have enchanted an impressive gallery of creative souls, from William Blake to Saul Bellow. Goethe and Coleridge admired his work, and Balzac included two Swedenborgian novels in *La Comédie Humaine.*

Much less carefully studied is the question of Swedenborg's place in intellectual history. But lately, a remarkable claim for his role has taken shape. Could it be that the arch-philosopher of reason, Immanuel Kant, was utterly fascinated by the very figure he lampooned so fiercely in *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*? It sounds improbable. But later this year, at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., Gregory R. Johnson will defend a dissertation that claims Swedenborg as a seminal influence on the philosopher. He sees his project as building on the work of intellectual historians Eric Voegelin and Frances Yates, who argued that gnosticism and the hermetic tradition lingered beneath the surface of early-modern thought. Yet considering Kant's status as the quintessential philosopher of reason—he did write *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* after all—Johnson's argument faces an uphill battle for acceptance.

So far, the young scholar has published articles based on his research in *Studia Swedenborgiana* and *The New Philosophy,* tiny Swedenborgian journals with few readers outside the denomination. But Johnson, who teaches philosophy at Georgia State University in Atlanta, is not himself a member of the flock. That makes it all the more striking that he believes Kant had a deeper interest in the mystic than most scholars have recognized. "Kant took Swedenborg *seriously,*" he writes. "Kant thought that some of Swedenborg's ideas could possibly be *true* and therefore must be critically examined, not merely dismissed out of hand."

Johnson's dissertation, titled "A Commentary on Kant's *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer,*" reexamines the philosopher's harsh satire. Kant's work is traditionally seen as an attack on Christian von Wolff, whose textbooks dominated German academic philosophy in the eighteenth century. Wolff had purported to demonstrate that human reason was wonderfully sufficient to the task of comprehending the universe and man's place in it. Kant devotes the first, and longest, section of *Dreams* to a ruthless analysis of Wolffian rationalism. He goes on to give a detailed, sarcastic account of Swedenborg's claims to have direct knowledge of the hidden structure of the cosmos. The juxtaposition is wicked. Kant implies that Wolffian metaphysics is fundamentally no better than the mystic's. It's like arguing that Judith Butler's work resembles the teachings of Ramtha.

So, anyway, runs the standard interpretation of *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer.* Yet Johnson was startled when he finally encountered the pamphlet itself. "I love Kant," Johnson says, "so I decided to read the early writings, which most philosophers ignore. When I reached *Dreams,* it was just obvious that the usual account was wrong. Kant is ambivalent about Swedenborg—you can see that if you actually read the text carefully—and it's even more obvious when you look at his other references to Swedenborg over the years."

The paper trail is thin but suggestive. In a 1763 letter, Kant replies to an inquiry about Swedenborg from Charlotte von Knobloch, a young society woman who was his acquaintance. "I am not aware that anybody has ever perceived in me an inclination to the marvelous," he assures her. "This is the position in which my mind stood for a long time, until the report concerning Swedenborg came to my notice." He recounts incidents purporting to show the mystic's clairvoyant abilities—for example, the time when, at a dinner party, Swedenborg nearly fainted as he saw the great Stockholm fire taking place, hundreds of miles away. Summa-

THE INFLUENCE

THE LONG SHADOW OF EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

BY **SCOTT McLEMEE**

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COULD IT BE THAT IMMANUEL KANT WAS UTTERLY FASCINATED BY THE VERY FIGURE HE ONCE LAMPOONED?

rizing the impressions of a friend who interviewed the seer at Kant's request, the letter describes Swedenborg as "a reasonable, polite, and open-hearted man; he is also a man of learning." Kant further indicates that he has corresponded with Swedenborg, who promises to answer his questions in a forthcoming book.

Throughout the letter, Kant appears skeptical but intrigued. His next step was to obtain his own copy of Swedenborg's behemoth *Arcana coelestia* ("Heavenly Secrets"), a work of some five thousand pages that combines biblical exegesis with philosophical digressions and detailed extrasensory travelogues. This purchase suggests more than idle curiosity, given Kant's paltry income as lecturer and tutor. Moreover, there is evidence that he threw himself into reading the book. *Dreams of the Spirit-Seer* would offer an accurate précis of Swedenborg's system of ideas—something possible only after a conscientious study of the loosely organized *Arcana*.

But by 1766, Kant's interest had nonetheless turned to disdain. In *Dreams of the Spirit-Seer,* he dubs the *Arcana* "eight quarto volumes full of nonsense" and now vilifies its author as being "without office or employment." (So much for the "reasonable, polite, and open-hearted man" described to Fraulein von Knobloch.) In his 1763 letter, while reporting on stories of Swedenborg's clairvoyance, Kant had noted the credibility of the witnesses. The same anecdotes are repeated in *Dreams*—but now the tone is sarcastic.

SO what happened during those three years? An obvious answer might be that Kant decided Swedenborg's claims were bunk. At the opening of *Dreams,* Kant confesses, "with a certain humiliation, to having been naive enough to investigate some of the stories." He adds that he ultimately found "what one usually finds when he has no business searching at all, exactly nothing."

But Johnson thinks that "humiliation" was a more decisive concern than any negative judgment of Swedenborg himself. By 1764 Berlin literary circles were gossiping that Kant was preparing an essay on the *Arcana*. This kind of talk wouldn't have done Kant much good. Already in his early forties, he had not yet secured a tenured position. He was well aware that a Leipzig professor had denounced Swedenborg as "the worst sort of heretic"—and he may have been afraid that his perceived receptivity to the heterodox theologian's ideas could land him in hot water. When his attack on Swedenborg was published, Kant made sure that copies were sent to the appropriate officials. Given the circumstances, Kant had compelling reasons to put some distance between himself and the mystic.

Yet, as Johnson emphasizes, the polemic (fart joke and all) is a curiously ambiguous performance. For all the ridicule, Kant makes no effort to debunk claims of the seer's abilities. He acknowledges, in a backhanded way, that he would like to think there's something to it, after all. Especially intriguing is a letter Kant wrote to the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, not long after the satire came out. In it, Kant hints that his reasons for mocking Swedenborg in *Dreams* were rather self-interested: "It's hard to imagine a method by which I could present my thoughts about Swedenborg and the *Arcana* without subjecting myself to ridicule. The wisest course seemed to be for me to take advantage of others and first do the ridiculing myself." Elsewhere, Kant sounds a little spooked: Some passages in *Dreams* suggest that the cold hand of the uncanny has the philosopher by the throat. "Either there is more intelligence and truth in Swedenborg's works than a first glance will reveal," Kant writes, "or else it is only an accident that he coincides with my system."

This, for Johnson, is the nub of the matter. He thinks that Kant found in Swedenborg not only attention-grabbing claims about the paranormal but philo-

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sophical ideas that would inform Kant's own thinking. Johnson notes that only after reading Swedenborg did Kant formulate the distinction between phenomena (things as they appear) and noumena (things in themselves). The spaceless and timeless order of the noumena has its ghostly analogue in the writings of Swedenborg. The Swede repeatedly describes the spiritual world as a territory of pure, direct, unmediated understanding—that is, a spaceless and timeless "place" in which everyone's thoughts are unambiguously expressed. (Swedenborg's angels speak a language as perfect as the one Leibniz dreamed of.) The spiritual realm is radically unlike physical nature. Yet they interpenetrate. And the buttonhook that joins them is man, who dwells in both worlds (though people are ordinarily blind to the spirits all around them). This element of Swedenborg's cosmology—the doctrine of "the divine human"—proved highly attractive to Blake and to the New England transcendentalists. And Johnson argues that it was a catalyst for the Kantian revolution.

If Kant found it expedient and face-saving to distance himself from Swedenborg in the public sphere, the evidence suggests that he let his guard down in the classroom. After securing a full professorship in 1770, Kant continued to discuss Swedenborg in his lectures. No texts of Kant's *Lectures on Metaphysics* survive, but—thanks to the laziness of eighteenth-century undergraduates—a thriving note-taking industry in Königsberg provides some clues. "A survey of these texts," Johnson writes in a recent paper for *Studia Swedenborgiana*, "allows us to frame two rather strong conclusions: First, Swedenborg's visions are discussed in all surviving notes on Kant's lectures on the state of the soul after death." Second, "we know that Kant was sufficiently impressed by Swedenborg to lecture on his ideas for more than thirty years [and his] impression was mostly positive."

On one occasion, Kant did reportedly call Swedenborg "a deliberate fraud," as Johnson acknowledges. But he regards that statement as anomalous. "With this one exception," he notes, "the tone is always respectful."

HOWEVER seriously Kant actually took Swedenborg, Johnson knows better than to expect a warm reception for his argument from mainstream historians of philosophy. Even so, he plans to expand his dissertation into a book entitled *Kant's Encounter with Swedenborg*. In the meantime, he has launched a new project: a study of Swedenborg's influence on American thought during the nineteenth century. The psychologist William James had an intimate knowledge of the visionary's work, as did his novelist brother, Henry—for their father was a prolific author of Swedenborgian treatises. Likewise, the philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce absorbed the mystic's influence from the elder James. The notion that Emanuel Swedenborg might be an ancestor of American pragmatism looks incongruous, at first glance. At second glance, too, perhaps. But as the "Swedish Aristotle" understood, better than most, there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy.

Scott McLemee is a contributing editor of *Lingua Franca*.

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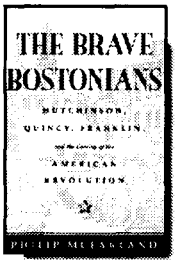

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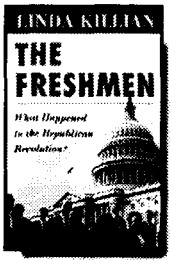

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continued from page 7

members of the department (in consultation with nontenured members).

ALEXANDER ALLAND
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Charlotte Allen replies: When I used the term "front man," I did not mean to disparage Alexander Alland Jr. or to slight the important role that everyone I talked to agreed he played in the reorganization of the Columbia anthropology department during the 1995–1996 academic year. I described him in my article as a "well-liked traditionalist," and several current and former faculty members I interviewed described him as the only one who could bring peace and a sense of positive accomplishment to the fractious and demoralized faculty of a department long in decline and by then on the brink of extinction. Alland was the only department member who enjoyed the respect of all sides—as I made clear in the article—which was why he was called back from sabbatical to become department chair. Nonetheless, I must stand by my story. Interviews with numerous Columbia sources indicated that Cohen played a significant role throughout the hiring process. Although Alland's search committee identified the stellar candidates whom Columbia eventually hired and made sure they were acceptable to the rest of the anthropology faculty, it was Cohen personally who did the negotiating and clinched the deals. Cohen has always emphasized, however, that the faculty search would not have been successful without Alland's active cooperation and his diplomatic oversight of the department during a crucial period.

HAIR BRAINED

Due to a printing error, a line of text was dropped from Liesl Schillinger's article, "Hairmeneutics" [Field Notes, April]. The text at the bottom of page twelve should have read: "The busy Zdatny is currently assembling a collection of the class-conscious columns by the great Parisian hairdresser Émile Long, which were published in Britain's *Hairdressers Weekly Journal* between 1910 and 1920. The columns describe, Zdatny says, the 'burden that fashionable women of his time had to bear—eight changes of clothes just for a day at the seaside!'"

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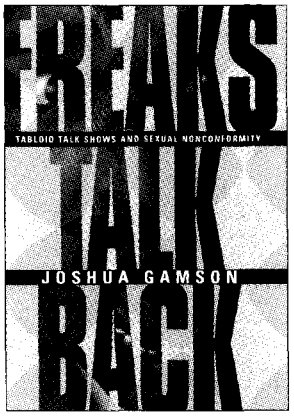

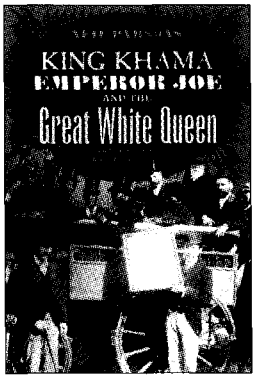

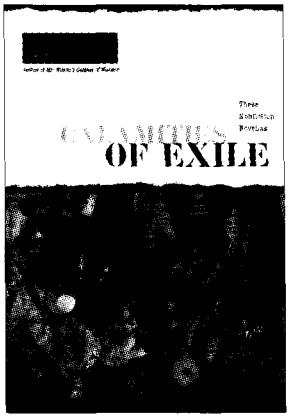

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EXPLORING THE BLACK ATLANTIC

APRIL 8-10, 1999

The Black Atlantic Project at **Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis** solicits papers from scholars exploring the black experience in Africa, Europe, and the Americas. We welcome papers from scholars who investigate issues of race, nation and gender, and whose work interrogates the very meaning of the Black Atlantic. Papers can be explicitly international and comparative, or they can focus on the national experiences of particular black communities that shed light on themes common to the Black Atlantic world.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 15, 1998

Send papers to: Deborah Gray White and Mia Bay, Project Directors Center for Historical Analysis, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 88 College Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ, 08901-8542 USA

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CONFERENCES

CULTURE & IDENTITY IN MODERN ROMANIA

The *Journal of the History of Ideas* is pleased to announce a conference on "Culture and the Politics of Identity in Modern Romania" to be held at the historic Elisabeta Palace in Bucharest, Romania from May 27–30, 1998. The multidisciplinary symposium will focus on a wide range of topics including mentalities, cultural forms, instructions and the construction of identities. The conference will offer fresh conceptualizations in literary, artistic, philosophical, economic and historiographic debates. Papers will explore the cross-cultural and intellectual contact of Romanians and non-Romanians on all Greater Romanian territories as well as the impact of outside influences on Romanian intellectual and cultural production. For further details contact Prof. Irina Livenzeanu or Susan Corbesero (identity@pitt.edu), History Department, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, tel: (412) 648-7451, fax: (412) 648-9074, or consult the web at <http://www.pitt.edu/~identity>.

Pittsburgh, PA; May 27–30, 1998

RHETORIC, THE POLIS & THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

The 28th annual meetings of the Rhetoric Society of America will be held at Carnegie Mellon University, June 4–7, 1998, at the historic William Penn Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh. Reprise of thirty years of scholarship in the history and cultures of rhetoric: literary, textual, oral, and electronic. Special forums and panels on The Rhetorics of Religion: Past and Present; Race and Rhetoric: Common Themes and Diverging Issues; and Rhetoric and Electronic Texts: Will the Global "One" Dominate the Local "Many"? Keynote speakers: George A. Kennedy, "Rhetoric and Culture;" Edward Said (tentative), and Jaqueline Jones Royster, "Sarah's Story: Gender, Race and Rhetorical Ethnography in Rhetorical Studies." For further information contact Danny Josephs, Carnegie Mellon University; josephs@andrew.cmu.edu, or Jan Swearingen, RSA President; jswearin@utxvms.cc.utexas.edu. Registration and conference information is also available through the website: EServer.org/Rhetoric/rsa.

Pittsburgh, PA; June 4–7, 1998

CLASSIC JOYCE

Announcing the XVI International James Joyce Symposium, "Classic Joyce." Topics for consideration might include the following: Joyce and the Classical Age; Classical Modernism; Classic Joyce/Classic Coke; Joycean Classics; Class in Joyce, Joyce in Class. Please contact the academic program coordinators, Cheryl Herr (University of Iowa) or R. Brandon Kershner (University of Florida), with paper titles and panel proposals as soon as possible: Cheryl Herr, phone 319-335-3219, fax 319-335-2535, e-mail <cheryl-herr@uiowa.edu>; R. Brandon Kershner, phone 352-392-6650, ext. 255, fax 352-392-0860, e-mail <rbkersh@nervm.nerdc.ufl.edu>. The following Italian agency will assist with registration and lodging: Patrizia De Guilmi, phone: (011) (39) 6 488 2433; fax: (011) (39) 6 488 0862; e-mail <joyce@uniroma3.it>. Visit the Classic Joyce Web site for updated information on schedules, panels, and events: <http://www.ucet.ufl.edu/~herden/rome>.

Rome, Italy; June 14–20, 1998

THE GLOBAL SHORT STORY

The Fifth Biannual International Conference of the Short Story in English will be focused on "The Global Short Story." The conference is designed to celebrate the short story's evolving forms, styles and themes, as produced by an expanding diversity of writers. Participants will represent most areas of the world, including Africa, Asia, Europe, South and North America, Australia and the Caribbean, and address such topics as postcolonialism, magical realism, regionalism, postmodernism, autobiografiction, hyperfiction, science fiction and fantasy, and multiculturalism. Writers expected include Rudolfo Anaya, Robert Olen Butler, Richard Ford, Ernest Gaines, Shirley Ann Grau, Barry Hannah, Wilson Harris, Bharati Mukherjee, Francine Prose and Sonia Sanchez. For registration information contact the University of New Orleans Metro College, Conference Services, ED 122, New Orleans, LA 70148, (504) 280-7317, confmc@uno.edu. For content information contact Shrtsty@aol.com or visit the website <members.aol.com/Shrtsty/home-index.html>

New Orleans, LA: June 27–30, 1998

POPULAR MUSIC & THE INSTITUTION

The International Association for the Study of Popular Music (U.S. Chapter) announces a call for papers for: For What It's Worth: Institutions & Popular Music/ Institutionalizing Popular Music. Although the subject of popular music and the concept of institutions would appear to be antithetical, much of the cultural capital affiliated with popular music predicates itself upon notions of anti-authoritarian individualism. At the same time, popular music and its analysts are irreparably connected to any number of institutions. Papers on the subject of any and all institutions connected to popular music are welcome; the conference aims to critique and theorize about how these bodies contain and direct our understanding of popular music. Send abstract of 250 words, including address, phone, e-mail, and any A.V. needs by May 15 to Dr. Bernard Gendron, Program Chair, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI 53201, begendron@csd.uwm.edu. For information on the conference or group: Dr. DavidSanjek, c/o BMI Archives, 320 W. 57th St, New York, NY, 10019, dsanjek@bmi.com.

Los Angeles, CA; October 16–18, 1998

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Hypotheses

GET SMART

Will we all become geniuses?

CONSIDER, IF YOU WILL, THE following scenarios.

The pessimistic scenario. In industrialized nations, people with lower IQs tend to have more children, and to have them earlier, than people with higher IQs. To a substantial extent, IQ is determined by genes. Since low-IQers are breeding faster than high-IQers, the average IQ should be declining over time. The rate of expected deterioration has been estimated to be anywhere from one to four IQ points a generation. By now we should be well on our way to becoming a nation of half-wits.

The optimistic scenario. IQ is also determined by environment. And the very changes that have removed the reproductive advantage that the higher socioeconomic classes once enjoyed over the lower classes—improved nutrition, hygiene, and medicine—have also enhanced cognitive environments across the board. So have better education, urbanization, and a rising average socioeconomic condition. Therefore, mean IQ should go up over time. We should be well on our way to becoming a nation of geniuses.

The pessimistic scenario was first limned by the Victorian scientist Sir Francis Galton. More recently, the specter of declining intelligence was conjured up by Charles Murray and Richard J. Herrnstein in *The Bell Curve*, which blamed the American welfare state for the unchecked breeding of the lower cognitive classes. With equal conviction, optimists hold out the hope that further environmental improvements might lift the cognitive functioning of society as a whole and eliminate the nagging fifteen-point average IQ differential between American blacks and whites.

So let us pose the question that we all, as sophisticated intellectuals, know to be meaningless: Which is more important, heredity or environment?

Well, it looks as if environment has been decisively winning the contest. Since the 1930s, massive IQ gains have been recorded in the United States, Europe, Canada, Australia, Israel, Brazil, Japan, and urban China—indeed, in every nation where data has been kept. The optimistic scenario seems to be prevailing.

The phenomenon of rising IQs was noticed in the 1980s by James R. Flynn, an American political scientist who teaches in New Zealand. The "Flynn effect" has an especially heartening implication for racial IQ disparities. The mean gap between American whites and blacks today appears to be about the same as the one between whites today and whites in the 1950s. Since the latter gap is patently environmental, not genetic, isn't it likely that the former is as well? And if IQs go up almost automatically over time in response to some unknown environmental cause, shouldn't it be possible to identify this cause and use the knowledge to equalize opportunity?

There, alas, is the rub. As a forthcoming volume from the American Psychological Association titled *The Rising Curve: Long-term Gains in IQ and Related Measures* makes clear, no one really knows what the mysterious factor X might be.

Contributors to the collection entertain every imaginable hypothesis. Some of the proposed explanations—better nutrition, better education, smaller families, homes full of stimulating puzzles and video games—imply that the higher IQ scores are matched by gains in real intelligence. Others suggest that the gains are a mere artifact, a result of defective tests or greater test-taking sophistication.

My personal favorite in the artifact category is the "Brand hypothesis" (after the British psychologist C.R. Brand), which attributes the gains to sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll. Earlier generations were too straitlaced and scrupulous when taking the IQ test, wasting precious time striving to answer every item correctly. In today's permissive society, kids think nothing of skipping or making guesses on hard questions, thereby getting more right within the allotted time.

But the Brand hypothesis fails to square with the data, as Flynn observes in his contribution to *The Rising Curve*. Nor, it seems, do the others. The nutrition hypothesis might look strong at first blush, especially considering that IQ gains over the generations have been accompanied by similar gains in average height and brain size. But there is plenty of contrary evidence—such as the fact that children born into the severe Dutch famine of 1944–1945 in no way missed out on the rising IQ curve. Greater test familiarity? Not likely—the gains began before testing was widespread and have continued into an era when it has become popular. Better education? Impossible—the gains are fully manifested before the age of six.

No one is more perplexed by all this than James Flynn himself. Despite the effect that bears his name, he admits that "one does not see an evolution from widespread retardation to normalcy or from normalcy to widespread giftedness" over the generations. Until we figure out what the Flynn effect really consists of, he says, we can scarcely hope to find its cause.

Meanwhile, as an illustration of just how slippery the issue of aggregate IQ gains can be, let me propose a painless little eugenics program. Some years ago, a well-known public official in California quit his job and moved to Alabama, prompting a local editorialist to observe that this probably raised the average IQ in both states. Such a thing is clearly possible (if, say, the California mean were 110, the Alabama mean 90, and the official's IQ 100). By the same token, it should be possible, by a suitable redistribution of people from state to state, to raise the average IQ of all fifty states. And then wouldn't the average IQ of the whole nation—which is, after all, just the average of the IQs of its constituent states—also go up? And couldn't the same process, carried out internationally, boost the average IQ of the entire world?

If you believe that, perhaps you should consider moving to Alabama.

JIM HOLT

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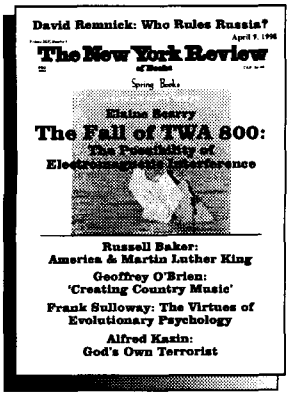

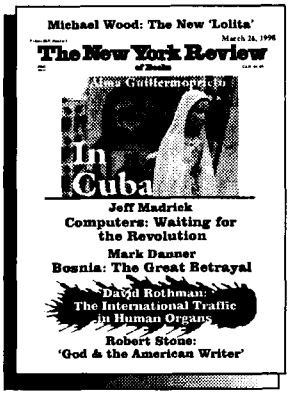

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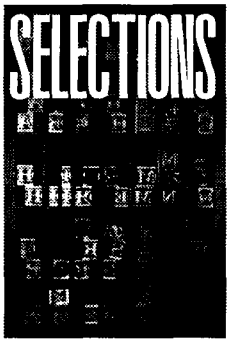

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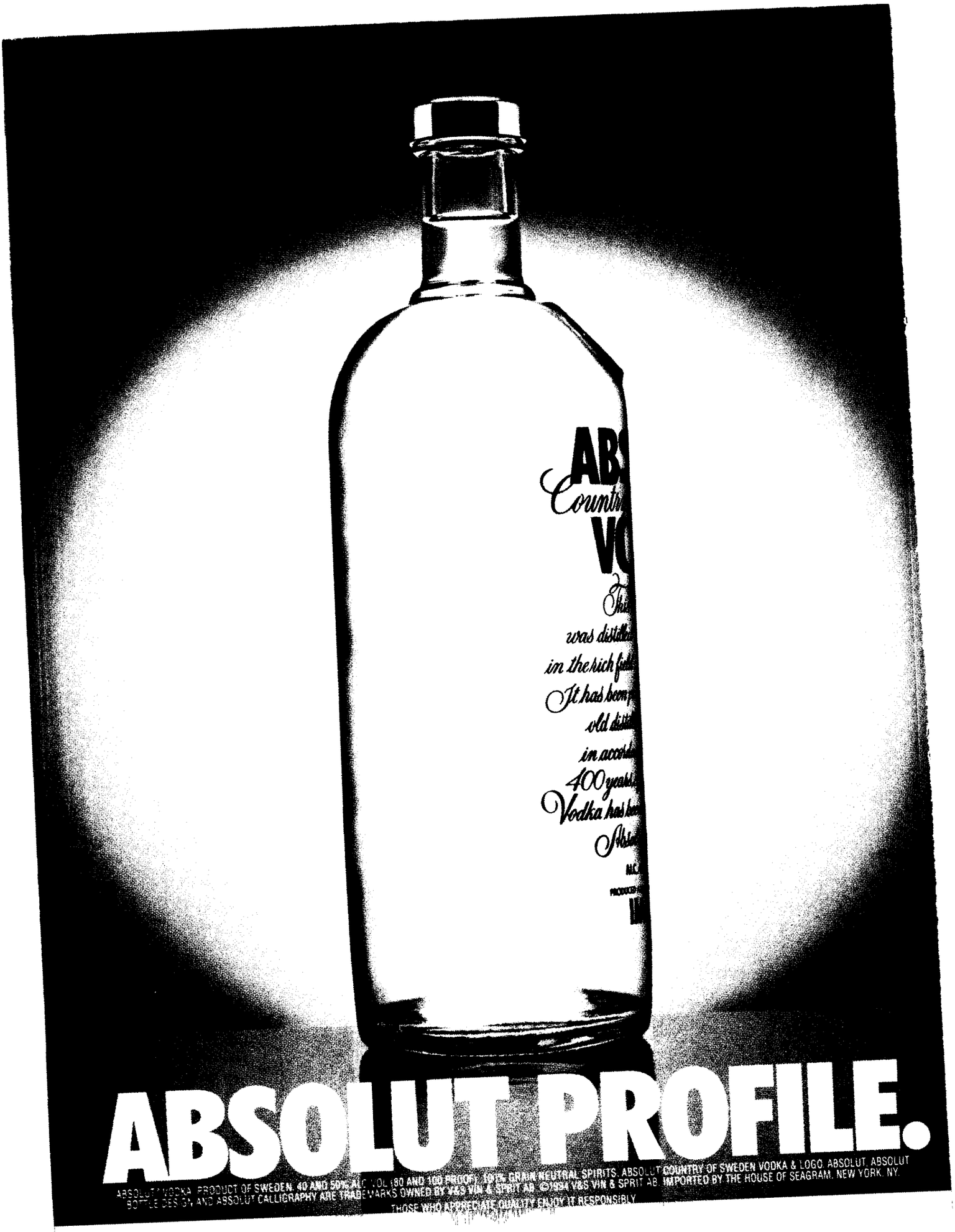
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